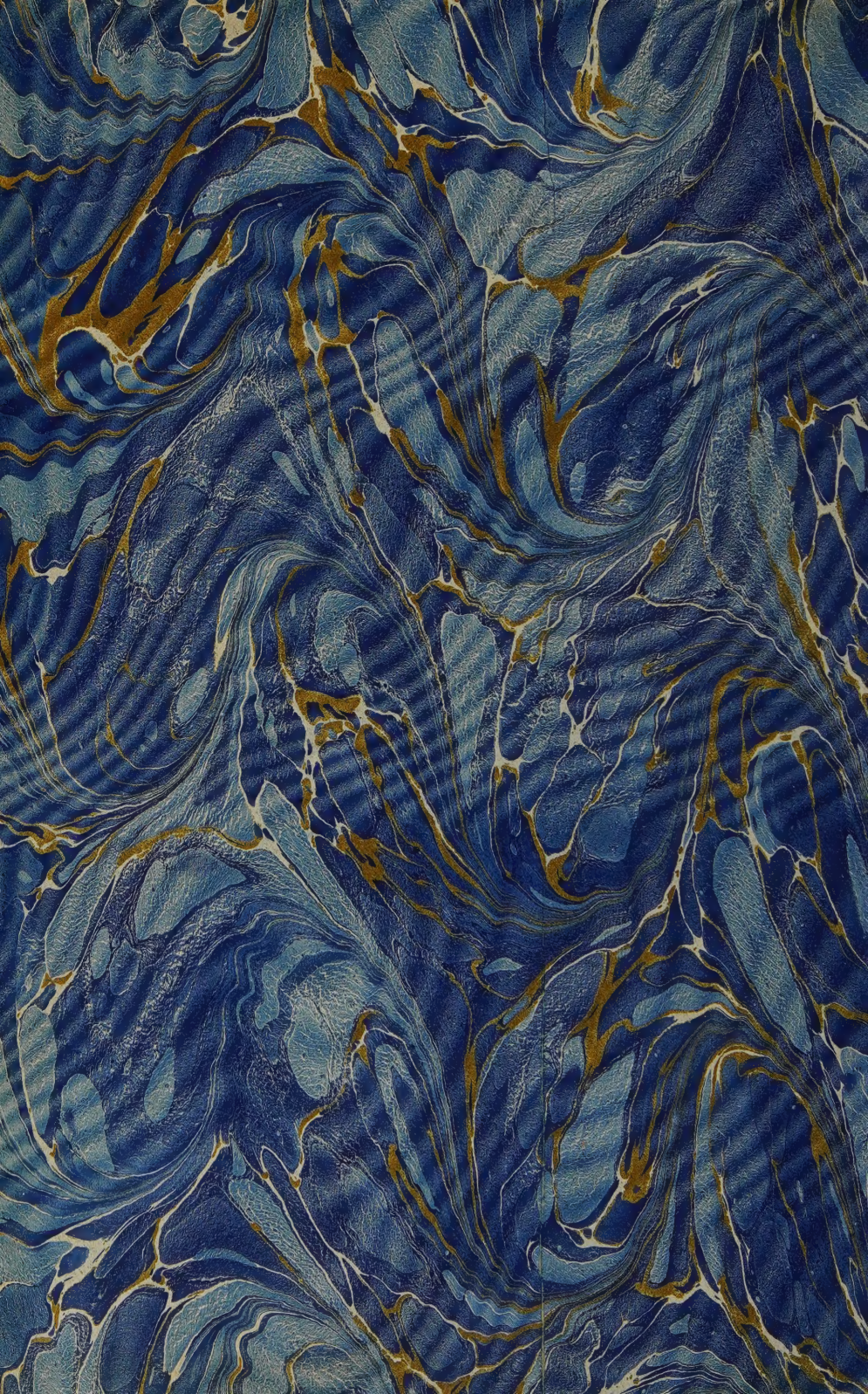

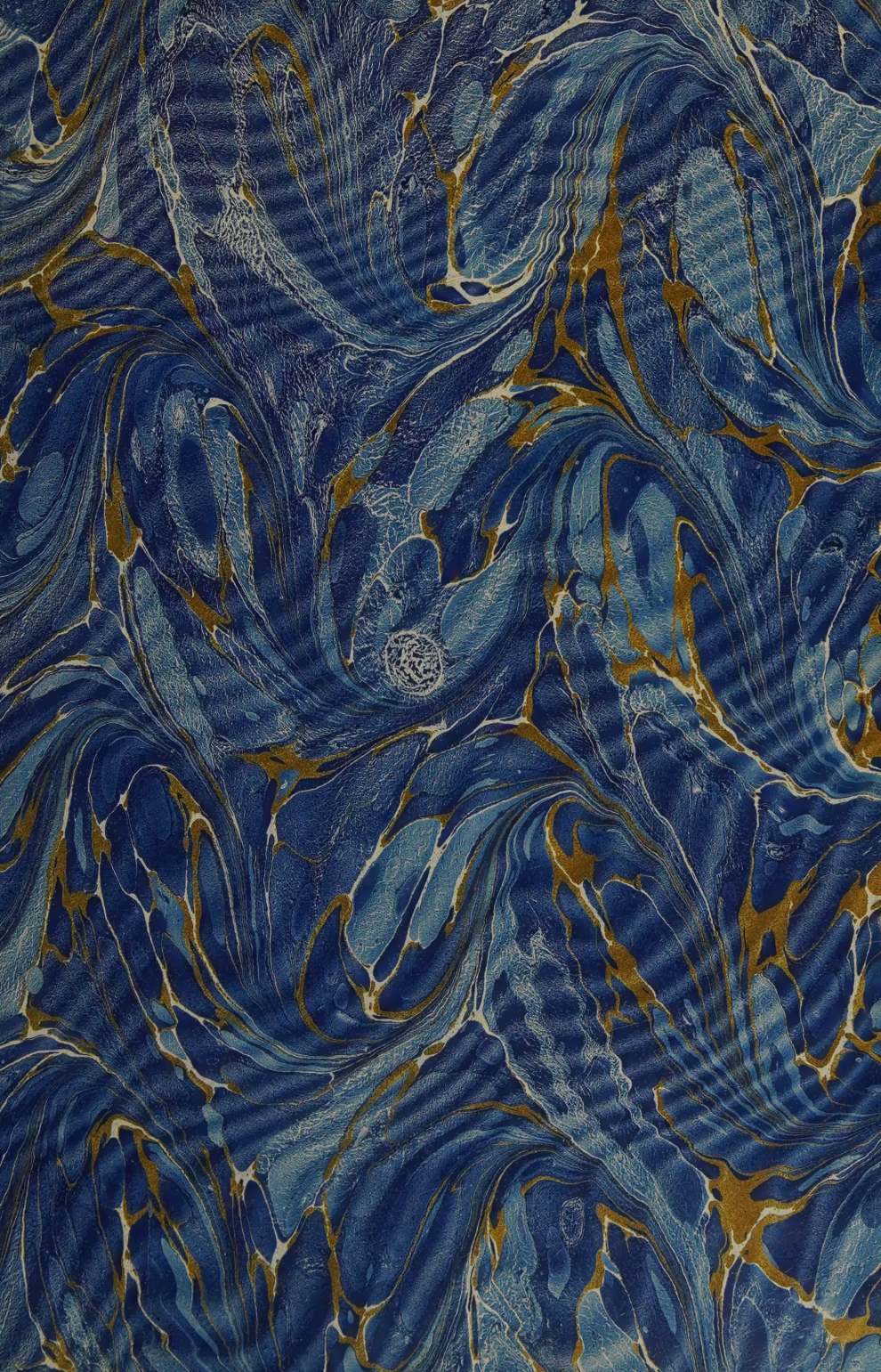

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
IN TWENTY VOLUMES

KING HENRY VI — PART III
KING RICHARD III

VOLUME X

The annotations at the foot of the page are intended to explain difficult phrases or allusions. Single words, which are no longer in common use, appear only in the glossary, which is printed in Volume XX.

The numbering of the lines follows that of the Cambridge Edition, the text of which is used in this edition.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
BY SIDNEY LEE

VOLUME X

KING HENRY VI—PART III

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY ADOLPHUS WILLIAM WARD
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY GERALD MOIRA

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CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction to King Henry VI, Part III, by Adolphus William Ward	ix
Text of the Play	1

INTRODUCTION

THE "Third Part of Henry VI," which carries on the action without a break from that of the Second Part, follows the "True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the Death of Good King Henrie the Sixt," so closely that the alterations contained in the later play may be said to consist only of details, and of the insertion of additional speeches or parts of speeches. The narrative of the "True Tragedie" itself is derived from Halle and Holinshed; a single detail, the knighting of Prince Edward, being apparently taken from Stowe, the single instance of any importance in which he is directly utilised in either of the two old plays. Several incidents in the "True Tragedie" occur in Holinshed only,—viz., the oath imposed on York (Act I, sc. i, ll. 196–201); the mention of Lord Cobham (*ib.*, sc. ii, l. 35); the mole-hill on which Richard of York is made to stand (*ib.*, sc. iv, l. 67), and the taunts addressed to him. The other mole-hill, on which King Henry afterwards meditates (Act II, sc. v, l. 14), is not,

however, in the "True Tragedie." Holinshed, too, points out that the Lancastrians lost all the battles at which Henry was present (Act II, sc. ii, l. 73, and "True Tragedie").

From Halle are likewise derived details not found elsewhere. Thus, perhaps, Act I, sc. i, l. 155, though the strength of Warwick in the counties named might be matter of common knowledge; and the numbers given in Act I, sc. ii, ll. 66, 68, 71, seem to be suggested by Halle's assertion that the Duke rashly hurried with 5000 against 18,000, or some say, 22,000, in contempt for a woman. Halle, or possibly his imitator the "Mirror," is responsible for the ascription of cruelty to Clifford, "the blood-supper," and for the myth of his slaughter of the child. The Earl of Rutland was a young man with an establishment of his own, from whom adhesion to his father's oath of loyalty had been required. Clifford's cry, "thy father slew mine," etc., is from Halle. The vivid picture of the battle of Towton is likewise, all of it, in Halle, even to a hint of son fighting against father. Further items taken over are Clarence's complaint (made, however, to the Earl of Warwick) as to his brother's unfair assignment of heiresses, — "three marriages more meeter for his two brethren and kin than for such new foundlings," — though, as a matter of fact, Clarence was married before Edward. Halle comments on Henry's unhappy fate (cf. Act IV, sc. vi, ll. 18–25), and tells how he was left alone, "as an host that should be sacrificed, in the bishop's palace of London" (cf. Act IV, sc. viii), mentioning Oxford's imprisonment in Hammes Castle.

Perhaps the proverb to which King Henry alludes (Act II, sc. ii, l. 48) needs no specific authority; it is, however, twice used by Latimer in his published sermons.[1]

[1] In his Third Sermon, preached before Edward the Sixth, it appears in the succinct form: "Happy is the child whose father goeth to the devil."

These and all the other details of the play, which are to be found in their exact form in both Halle and Holinshed, are taken over from the "True Tragedie;" but from a number of small corrections it would seem clear that the passages in question were verified by the author or authors of Part III. Thus, the character of Cumberland is omitted: there was no such earldom at the time, although the "True Tragedie" obviously intends him for a Clifford. In Act III, sc. ii, l. 2, Grey's name is correctly given as "John" ("Richard" in the "True Tragedie"); but the statement of his dying on behalf of the Yorkists is, for obvious reasons, not corrected. So, again, in Act II, sc. iii, l. 15, the incorrect "father" of the "True Tragedie" is changed into "brother;" "the bastard of Salisbury, brother to the Earl of Warwick," say Halle and Holinshed. In Act IV, sc. i, ll. 52–57, the brides are correctly assigned — apparently with the help of Stowe; and in Act IV. sc. i, l. 27, Somerset (in the "True Tragedie" Hastings) is, quite plausibly, intended for the Duke, who submitted to Edward after Towton, but afterwards revolted: two dukes are in the play compressed into one.

In Act I, sc. i, l. 238, "Warwick is chancellor and lord of Calais" is a correct addition; and such is also "Scotland hath will to help, but cannot help" (Act III, sc. iii, ll. 34–35), which would seem to come from Monstrelet. Lastly, the slight alterations of the names of places on the roads to Coventry indicate a close accuracy which would possibly be instinctive in a writer personally acquainted with those roads.

The remaining additions to the "True Tragedie" consist of a few amplifications of the speeches, — of which one at least (Act IV, sc. vii, ll. 10–12) can hardly be thought a felicitous change, — and of considerable additions, of which the

most important are the larger parts of Henry's soliloquies in Act II, scenes ii and v, and his speeches in Act IV, scenes vi and viii, with the remainder of Act IV, sc. vi; also much of Gloucester's part in Act III, sc. ii, and some telling lines in Act IV, sc. i; also most of Margaret's speeches before King Louis in Act III, sc. iii, and in Act V, sc. iv, and, finally, the watchmen in Act IV, sc. iii, and the taunts in Act V, sc. i, ll. 48–57.

Frequently the use is discernible which has been made of the very words of the histories. Examples of this are: Rutland "holding up his hands for mercy"; Warwick at Towton, slaying his horse, with the words, "Surely I will tarry with him that will tarry with me"; the battle "uncertainly heaving and setting on both sides" (Holinshed) "in a manner unnatural; for in it the son fought against the father, the brother against the brother," etc. (Halle); and the loyalty of Hastings, who "had married the Earl's sister, yet was ever true to the King his master." Indeed, Act IV, sc. ii–vii keeps singularly close to the authorities.

As to style and diction, there seems little to distinguish the "Third Part of Henry VI" from the "Second" in those characteristics which were noted in it above. Alliteration is much employed in Part III, but in that modified form which was found to prevail in the earlier Part, — being most largely used by personages whose utterances have manifestly been elaborated with special care, such as King Henry and Clifford; and this again tallies with the greater apparent frequency of alliteration in Part III as compared with the "True Tragedie," though there is more, or at least more noticeable alliteration in Part I than in either. Part III has more rime than Part II; that in Part III is largely but by no means entirely taken over from the "True Tragedie," and is nearly always to be found at the end of

speeches. The peculiar feature of a repetition of words or sounds, which was noticed above as observable in both Parts I and II, is also to be found in Part III, where it appears in instances reproduced from the "True Tragedie," but with augmentation, Finally, the classical allusions in Part III are for the most part, but not entirely, taken over from the same play. The mannerism of the omitted definite article also occasionally recurs.[1] Of more significance, as indicating greater maturity of style, is a certain conscious irony. The phrase (subsequently repeated) "Thou setter up and plucker down of kings," descriptive in Act II, sc. iii, l. 37 (as in the "True Tragedie") of the power of the Almighty, is in Act III, sc. iii, l. 157 savagely applied by Queen Margaret to Warwick (this is not in the "True Tragedie"), and again calmly by Warwick to himself (Act V, sc. i, l. 26; this is substantially in the "True Tragedy"). The sneers in scriptural parlance of Richard of Gloucester (Act I, sc. ii, l. 18, and Act IV, sc. i, l. 32) are not in the older play.

Altogether the Third Part, towards its close, suggests a very explicable determination on the part of the author or authors to wind up the action of the play; their adherence to the "True Tragedie" becomes, if possible, more marked than it was before; and there is about the progress towards the end an unmistakeable air of business — a desire, not to treat things perfunctorily, but to spend no unnecessary time over them. And yet (this should by no means be overlooked) the reader or spectator is left with a sense of *more to come* beyond the framework of the play; no doubt is left as to the personage to whom the future will appeal — to whom per-

[1] So in Act II, sc. i, l. 82: "For selfsame wind that I should speak withal."

haps that future may belong. This personage is not the "sportful" King Edward IV, in whose concluding hope of "lasting joy" little interest can be felt, nor the shifting Clarence — but the prince who seals the bargain of national peace and fraternal concord with a Judas kiss.

In what there remains for me to state here, I have hardly anything to offer in addition to the summary previously attempted by me after a full reconsideration of this complex subject under the light of researches as ample and profound as are to be found in any chapter of Shakespeare criticism. With regard, then, to what seem the most probable conclusions on the question as to the authorship of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI," and on the antecedent question as to the authorship of the two old plays of which these two Parts are now generally held to be enlarged and modified reproductions, the following may suffice.[1] It has been shown in the preceding pages,

[1] The authorities on the subject are in the main the same as those cited in the course of my remarks on "Henry VI" in the second edition of my "History of English Dramatic Literature" (1899), Vol. II, pp. 58–74. Since Malone, the late Mr. Grant White's "Essay On the Authorship of King Henry the Sixth" (in vol. VII of his edition of the Works of William Shakespeare, Boston, 1859) is the earliest critical contribution of importance to the discussion of the question. His views were put in a shorter form by Mr. G. L. Rives in his Harness Prize Essay on the same subject (Cambridge, 1874); and Mr. Grant White himself summarised them in his "Studies in Shakespeare" (London, 1885), pp. 21 *seq.* The conclusions stated by Mr. F. G. Fleay in his remarkably complete and closely argued paper "Who Wrote Henry VI?" in "Macmillan's Magazine," vol. XXXIII (November, 1875 April, 1876), were repeated, with some important modifications, in his "Chronicle History of the Life and Works of William Shakespeare" (London, 1886),— a book which, whatever may be the judgment formed as to some of its conclusions, has a permanent place in the history of English literature. Finally, the subject received the most exhaustive treatment which has yet been given to it, or with which it is likely to meet for a long time to come, in Miss Jane Lee's paper "On the Authorship of the Second and Third Parts of Henry VI," in the "Transactions of the New Shakspere Society" (1876), where, on a suggestion thrown out

more fully than in my own earlier observations on the subject, how very little in the way of actual new matter, as distinct from additions or ornament in the way of expansion and of stylistic improvements, was introduced by the hands to which, on the above assumption, the new versions of the two old plays were due, and how very few corrections of facts, or of the exposition of facts, were made during the process of "beautifying" the text (if Greene's word may be used without prejudice). Thus the difference between the two pairs of plays reduces itself in the main, though not entirely, to a question of form rather than of matter — in other words, to a question of style (including both diction and versification) — a kind of internal evidence which is of all kinds the most difficult to judge, and which has at times proved a very deceptive one to trust.

The problem of the authorship of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" cannot, then, be discussed apart from that of the authorship of the two old plays with which they are respectively connected; but in discussing it we must perforce begin by going back, more especially as on the primary question of the respective priority of the two pairs of plays Mr. Fleay

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by Dr. Furnivall in the discussion on her paper, she supplements it by a "Table of Shakspere's and Marlowe's Shares in 2 and 3 Henry VI." Attention may also be directed to Miss Emma Phipson's paper, "The Natural History Similes in Henry VI," in the same Society's "Transactions," 1877–9, and Dr. Furnivall's "Table of parallel animal expressions in the Rape of Lucrece," and in 2 and 3 Henry VI, *ib.*, 1875–6; as well as to the late Mr. R. Simpson's "The Politics of Shakspere's Historical Plays" (V. "Henry VI"), *ib.*, 1874, and (though it has no bearing on the question of authorship) to Mr. P. A. Daniel's "Time Analysis of the Plots of Shakspere's Plays" (III.), *ib.*, 1877–9. Cf. also Mr. A. H. Bullen's Introduction to his "Works of Christopher Marlowe" (1885), vol. I, lxxix–lxxxiii, and Professor Churton Collins' General Introduction to his "Works of Robert Greene" (1905), vol. I, pp. 67–69.

is in opposition to the generally received opinion. Malone, Grant White, and Miss Lee, entertain no doubt as to the priority in date of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" to the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI;" whereas Mr. Fleay advances the theory that the former two plays "consisted of surreptitious fragments taken down in shorthand at theatrical performances, and patched up by some inferior hack, hired to write additions, or by some strutting player, who interpolated bits of sensation for the groundlings." Now, it cannot be denied that among the additional matter to be found in the two Parts as compared with the other plays a good deal may be described as "poor"; but in all ages of the theatre adapters, especially if their work has to be done in a hurry, are apt not to be overnice in the choice of their patches. Again, it must be allowed that the notorious passage in Greene's "Groatsworth of Wit" can only be regarded as proving that the "Third Part of Henry VI" plagiarised from the "True Tragedie," if we assume as certain that it was a literary plagiarism, not the actor's declamation of other men's compositions, which Greene intended to satirise; and this assumption I agree with Mr. Fleay and the late Mr. R. Simpson (a sure-footed critic, though one who freely used his imagination) in declining to make. If, on the other hand, the passage does refer to a literary plagiarism, then, if Mr. Fleay's theory were correct, Greene would have accused Shakespeare of plagiarising a passage which was itself a plagiarism. Mr. Fleay's arguments from the history of theatrical companies and from that of publishers are too full of conjecture to carry conviction; and we are thus reduced to an issue of comparative probabilities. But could anything be

more improbable than that the compilers of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" were so unlucky as to miss, or so foolish as to leave out, some of the finest passages in the plays which they conveyed — such, for instance, as two cited by Miss Lee — York's description of Salisbury in the last scene of the Second Part,[1] and parts[2] of his picturesque first speech in Act I, sc. iv, of the Third Part. At the same time some particulars not in "Henry VI" are to be found in the other plays — such as the elaboration of the Duchess of Gloucester's penance and the description of Jack Cade's external appearance in the "Contention"; and I think Miss Lee goes too far in asserting that "though the author of "Henry VI" might have rejected such things, it is scarcely probable that any copyist would have invented or inserted them." Why not? Still, it cannot be denied that, if Mr. Fleay's theory be accepted, we must suppose the compilers of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" to have contrived to re-edit their originals in what is beyond all doubt a much cruder and more primitive kind of versification, and a less effective as well as less ornate diction — and to have done this while the much superior old model was still in the remembrance of playgoers. This seems to me incredible.

It must not, however, be overlooked that the 1619 edition of "The Whole Contention" was intermediate between the quartos of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" of 1600 and the Folio "Henry VI" of 1623; and that, as has been already pointed out, this 1619 edition contains a

[1] "That winter lion, who in rage forgets
Aged contusions and all brush of time,
And, like a gallant in the brow of youth,
Repairs him with occasion."

[2] Including the simile of the swan.

certain number of modifications of the texts of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie," though these do not approach those of the Folio in amount. Here again, in order to avoid Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps' conjecture that Shakespeare subjected these texts to a poetical revision, Mr. Fleay resorts to another (also baseless) conjecture that the publisher Pavier "obtained a few shorthand notes from the theatre, and thus corrected his stolen copy."

Accepting, then, as on the whole more probable, the priority in date of composition of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" to the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI," we come to the further question: who was the author, or who were the authors, of the earlier two plays? Neither Charles Knight nor the German critics, who, as in the case of the authorship of the whole trilogy of "Henry VI," had the full courage of their belief that Shakespeare was also the author of the early "Sketches," were able to adduce any evidence in support of this belief beyond that of their internal consciousness. But Ulrici, in his last deliverance on the subject[1] allowed that "in the earliest impressions these plays have come down to us in a mutilated and corrupt condition"; and Delius, who argued with considerable force for the essentially Shakespearean authorship of the two old plays, cleverly supposed them not only to have been obtained by a piratical publisher from actors, but to have possibly been manipulated by some "subordinate" poet for the purposes of publication.[2]

On the other side, according to which Shakespeare had no share whatever in the composition of these earlier

[1] In "Shakespeare Jahrbuch" vol. I (1864) p. 85.

[2] See his "Introduction" to the "Third Part of Henry VI" in vol. I of his edition of Shakespeare (Elberfeld, 1872), where he reprints both the old plays in full.

plays, stands the whole body of English Shakespeare commentators and critics — from Malone and Drake to Hallam, Harness, Collier, and Dyce, and from these to Fleay and Furnivall, and Miss Jane Lee, who by her masterly essay may be said to have made the subject her own. The first argument on this side of the question is the fact that there is no contemporary statement as to any direct connexion between Shakespeare and these two plays; although a line which occurs in one of them was, as has been mentioned, quoted by Greene as early as 1592, and although they were separately printed in 1594 and '95, and reprinted in 1600. Only in 1619, when they were conjointly reprinted three years after his death, were they attributed to him by a piratical publisher.

The second argument is that in 1595 the "True Tragedie" and in 1600 the "Whole Contention" were printed as acted by Lord Pembroke's men; whereas Shakespeare is not known to have been connected with any company but the Lord Chamberlain's (afterwards the King's)[1]. Neither of these arguments can be regarded as absolutely conclusive. Are they confirmed by internal evidence?

Would the two old plays as they stood have been assigned to Shakespeare as the author of the substantial part of them, had they not been followed by the later and more elaborate version? Do they resemble rough drafts which closely, though not slavishly, follow their main authorities, or are they compositions on which, notwithstanding many crudities of form, the impress of a single mind seems left? Does the general want of regularity in the

[1] The fact that the "First Part of Henry VI" was possibly acted by Lord Strange's men in 1592, is reconciled by Mr. Fleay with the above statement by means of the assumption that the play had passed to the Lord Chamberlain's servants before 1599, the probable date of the production of "Henry V," the Epilogue of which seems to allude to it (see above).

versification, which in some scenes is exchanged for what Miss Lee aptly calls a "sing-song rhythm" point to unity of workmanship, or rather to the continued labour of the artificer's shop?

A view which would be reconcilable with the belief that it is impossible to accept the two old plays as solely and undividedly Shakespeare's work is taken by Halliwell-Phillipps, Staunton, and more especially by Grant White, while Dr. Furnivall extends to it some reluctant favour. Shakespeare, though not sole author of these plays, had a share in their composition. This compromise, or half-way solution, involves the supposition (for nobody, I take it, could contend that he had a share in the "Contention" and "True Tragedy," but none in the revision resulting in the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI") that he revised work of which he had himself been part author; and it seems futile to seek a way out of this difficulty — not, I think, in itself insuperable — by assuming the existence of some yet earlier plays, out of which Shakespeare and his associates formed the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie." Such plays *may* have existed; but we know nothing whatever of or about their existence. We are thus obliged once more to fall back, as Grant White and others do, upon internal evidence; and to seek for an answer to the question, Is there anything essentially Shakespearean which we find in the old plays, or which was taken over into "Henry VI" from the old plays?

This brings us at once to the significance of the Jack Cade scenes in the "Contention" — for it will be readily allowed that no other scenes in either of the two plays stand out similarly from the rest.[1] It is the strong impression,

[1] I think that Miss Lee's refusal to attach any importance, in this connection, to the supposed analogy between Biron's speech in "Love's Labour's Lost" (Act IV,

if not the absolute conviction, of the foremost of living English poets, whose critical insight adds further authority to his opinion on such a subject, that these scenes are Shakespeare's; in Mr. Swinburne's own words,[1] "their forcible realism, their simple life-like humour, can scarcely be ascribed to any hand but Shakespeare's." And Dr. Furnivall, steeped like no other English scholar of his eminence in the lore of the matter, avows that he would gladly agree that Shakespeare had no hand in these sketch-plays, "if only he could made up his mind that the first sketch of Cade was not Shakespeare's."[2] Now, I cannot agree with Miss Lee in her view that (supposing the "Contention" to have been written by 1592) Shakespeare was not possessed of sufficient "knowledge of the world and of the things that are in the world" to have enabled him to write these scenes. It seems to me that the "knowledge of the world" displayed in them is that exhibited by many a youth (and Shakespeare would at the time have been more than a mere youth) who knows something of the people — with a large or a small P — and something of the notions entertained of the people by those towards whom he looks for patronage. And while I agree in thinking the satire racy and vivacious, and such as might very well have been indited by Shakespeare when a young man not yet capable of such treatment of the same theme as he afterwards, with variations, gave to it in "Julius Cæsar" and in "Coriolanus" — I am not prepared to assert that the humour could have been no other playwright's but his. Although I am fully conscious of the weight of the authority on the

sc. iii, l. 290) and York's speech in the "Second Part of Henry VI" (Act I, sc. i, l. 215) will command general assent.

1 "Fortnightly Review," January, 1876.

2 "New Shakspere Society's Transactions," 1876, p. 283.

opposite side, I feel bound to say that the *vis comica* of these scenes does not strike me as beyond the limit of the powers of Peele ;[1] while I think that Greene, who could imitate most things that he chose to imitate, and whose inbred arrogance would have commended to him the spirit of the satire, might quite conceivably have had a hand in making it effective. Nor is an unknown author — such as the writer of the excellent comic scenes in " Sir Thomas More " (1590 *c.*) — out of the question.

For my part, as I have said before, I find it more difficult to attribute to any known authorship other than Shakespeare's certain other passages in the two old plays, in which, in Grant White's felicitously chosen words, " thought, diction, and rhythm sprang up together to flow in a consentaneous stream." The stately opening of the " Contention ; " the pathos of the " Duchess " Eleanor in the midst of her shame ; the speeches of Warwick in Duke Humphrey's death-scene, and more especially that containing the similes of the dead heifer and the murderous kite ; the fury of Suffolk's curse, and the intense reminiscent passion of his farewell to the Queen ; or again, in the " True Tragedie," York's speech about his valorous sons ; the fire of invective in the last dialogue between York and the Queen ; the " aloofness," to use an ugly but expressive word, of King Henry in the hour of his capture ; the downfall of Warwick, as that of the all-overtopping cedar, and the diabolical fury of Gloucester in making an end of the poor King's shadowy life — not one of these passages, and not all of them taken together, seem to me to prove themselves

[1] I see from a notice of H. Schütt's edition of " The Life and Death of Jack Straw," in the Shakespeare Jahrbuch, vol. XXXVIII (1902), pp. 283–285, that the authorship of this old play, in which there are some parallels to the " Contention," has been ascribed to Peele ; but I agree with W. Keller, the writer of the notice, that there seems no necessity for connecting an important name with it.

Shakespeare's; but it is difficult to reject as absolutely untenable the belief that he had any concern in them. Unless, therefore, we take refuge in Halliwell-Phillipps' somewhat far-fetched supposition, that passages in the impressions of the two plays dating from 1594 and 1595 were introduced into them from the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI," supposing these to have been already on the stage — we must leave the notion of a co-operation by Shakespeare in the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" in the position of an unproved surmise.

If, then, Shakespeare was not the original author of these two plays, and if the question whether he had any share in them cannot with confidence be answered in the affirmative, can any further hypothesis be successfully maintained as to their authorship? The writers who here alone come into question, because of them alone plays remain to us which will serve for the purpose of comparison, are Marlowe, Greene, and, perhaps, Peele. Lodge and Nashe cannot definitely be drawn into this enforced competition, because their extant share in the acted drama of the age is so small; and no serious attempt has been made, or indeed practically could have been made, to urge a claim on their behalf. With the mention of Kyd's or one or two other names we should be taken into the region of pure conjecture, into which I for one decline to stray.

Among the dramatists previously mentioned, there is an external probability in favour of Greene, who, according to the testimony of Nashe, wrote "more than four others" for Lord Pembroke's company, by whom the "True Tragedie" was performed. On the other hand, the fact that Marlowe's "Edward II" was also played by Lord Pembroke's men so far strengthens the possibility that he was concerned in the composition of the two old plays.

In the matter of versification, Miss Lee is no doubt quite right in saying that "Marlowe's versification was at times largely under the influence of that traditional monotony of metrical structure from which Shakespeare was the first to break wholly free." Unless, however, we are to date the two old plays further back than 1592 or the preceding year (which would considerably weaken the force of Greene's allusion in the "Groatsworth," supposing it to have been to a line in the "True Tragedie"), we might assuredly have expected a more striking agreement in versification as well as in general qualities of style than can be said to be observable between the two old plays and "Edward II," which was brought out in 1592 (or at the latest in 1593). It is quite true that, if the infrequency of rime in these plays is to be regarded as a sound argument against Shakespeare's authorship of them, it is difficult to see who but Marlowe could at so early a date have written plays with so little rime in them, and dependent, so far as the verse goes, on its own strength. (Of course there are in the two plays many broken lines, for which publishers and players rather than the authors may fairly be held responsible.)[1]

The argument in favour of Marlowe, then, apart from certain parallelisms of expression,[2] practically reduces it-

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[1] Miss Lee cites eight lines or pairs of lines from the "Contention" and "True Tragedie," repeated or imitated from Marlowe — not of course all of them exact repetitions, but such instances as:

"Even to my death — for I have lived too long." ("Cont.")

"Nay, to my death — for too long have I lived." ("Edward II," Act V, scene vi.)

But who could set this down as a proof that it was Marlowe who repeated himself? Shakespeare, we know, occasionally quoted Marlowe. (Peele has, in "Edward I,"

"Haste death — for Joan hath lived too long.)

[2] Of such Mr. Bullen (Introduction to Marlowe's Works, vol. I, p. lxxxi) notes

self to the proposition that, if Shakespeare did not write certain scenes in the two old plays, there was no contemporary dramatist sufficiently gifted to have written them but Marlowe. As such Miss Lee indicates (if my counting be correct) the scene of Duke Humphrey's death in the "Contention" (from Suffolk's re-entrance) and Clifford's slaughter of young Rutland in the "True Tragedie." Allowing that at the time Marlowe stood forth among his contemporaries, including Shakespeare, like no other writer, the marks of his genius discernible in such scenes as these are not to my mind sufficiently specific to be convincing. And I cannot avow myself very forcibly struck by the resemblances of thought to Marlowe perceptible in the old plays: in the fury of the contending nobles there is nothing specially characteristic of him; the mild despondency of Henry VI may be in some measure like that of Mycetes in "Tamburlaine," and like that of Edward II, but it is far less rough-edged than the former, and on the other hand far less elaborated than the latter.

For the claim put forward on behalf of Greene there is cumulatively more to urge. Before 1592, as Mr. Churton Collins has pointed out,[1] Greene's contemporaries and friends are silent about his work as a playwright,

two instances — the use of the verb "to mask" in Bullenbrooke's conjuration in the "Contention":

— "the silence of the Night,
Wherein the Furies maske in hellish troupes" —

which verb occurs several times in "Tamburlaine," but not in Marlowe's later plays; and the following passage in the speech of Iden when bringing in Cade's head —

"Deep-trenched furrows in his frowning brow" —

as compared with the "Second Part of Tamburlaine," Act I, scene iii:

"But in the furrows of his frowning brow."

1 "Introduction" to Greene's "Dramatic Works," vol. I, pp. 67–69.

and in his own writings no mention is made of his plays; moreover, Nashe, in his address prefixed to Greene's "Menaphon," though he manifestly intended to pour contempt upon Marlowe and his associates (Miss Lee thinks, upon Kyd) as contrasted with Greene, says nothing about any plays written by the latter. Thus it is quite possible that he may have been concerned in a greater or less measure with more plays than bear his name; and his facility as a playwright was, as we have seen, afterwards specially attested by Nashe, and as a matter of fact only formed part of a general facility almost unparalleled, and duly held up to scorn by such an antagonist as Gabriel Harvey. The difficulty of assuming Greene's cooperation in the two old plays is increased rather than diminished by assuming Marlowe's; for there is no proof of their having worked together as dramatists; and whether or not in the "Groatsworth" Greene complained of literary plagiarism of himself and Marlowe, he certainly says nothing in that tract as to their having been associated as playwrights. Thus we have to fall back upon style, versification, and incidental detail. It cannot be denied that resemblances to the diction and versification of Greene are to be found in the two old plays, though, as I have remarked elsewhere, it is somewhat suspicious to find them to be largely taken from "Greene the Pinner of Wakefield," a play of which Greene's authorship cannot yet be said to have been with certainty established. There might also seem some force in the fact of the repeated use in the two plays of the obsolete use of "for to" = to,[1] which Miss Lee has noted as occurring five times in the "Contention" (and, curiously, twice in that bit of the Incantation Scene which is to be

[1] *E. g.*, "And conjure them for to obey my will."

found only in that old play) and four times in the "True Tragedie"; whereas Shakespeare uses the form only a few — Churton Collins says eight — times. But as it also occurs now and then in Marlowe, and more often in Peele's "Edward I" than either in the "Contention" or "True Tragedie," it may be said to prove too much. Miss Lee mentions certain resemblances of verbal expression, which she judiciously herself describes as not decisive, and which, as their occurrence is for the most part isolated, I should be inclined to regard as fortuitous. The total number of lines in the two old plays which closely resemble lines in plays undoubtedly by Greene is in any case smaller than that of those which resemble lines in Marlowe. It is certainly odd that the name of "mightie Abradas, the great Masadonian Pyrate" ("Contention") who in the "Second Part of Henry IV," Act IV, sc. i, l. 108, is changed into "Bargulus the strong Illyrian pirate" should not be known to recur anywhere else in English literature except in a passage of Greene's "Penelope's Web." It is also impossible, as Miss Lee points out, to avoid being struck by the number of proverbial expressions which occur in the two old plays, and which help to give to them and to "Henry VI" as a whole a certain sententious colouring: these are more in Greene's manner — as that of the conscious trained man of letters — than in that of perhaps any of his contemporaries. The abundant classical allusions in these plays I am not prepared to pronounce as speaking for Greene rather than for Marlowe. The occasional introduction of fragments of Latin into the dialogue[1] is, I believe, more in Mar-

[1] Cf. in "Part II," Act I, scene iv, l. 22: "adsum"; *ib.*, l. 61 "aio te," &c.; Act II, scene i, l. 53; "nosce teipsum"; Act IV, scene vii, l. 49: "bona terra"; and in "Part III," Act I, scene iii, l. 48: "Dii faciant," &c.

lowe's than in Greene's way; but it is not altogether out of Shakespeare's.

Thus I conclude — if it be a conclusion — that Marlowe and Greene very possibly, and Greene probably, had a share in the authorship of the two old plays, and that Peele, who was certainly possessed of a racy vein of humour, as shown in his "Old Wives' Tale," as well as in his "Edward I," may conceivably likewise have had some concern in them. But, if I am asked to go further, and to seek (as I could in no case successfully do) to emulate Miss Lee in laying down, with a modesty of manner reminding one of the blandness with which of old certain proposals used to be brought forward for reconstructing the Old Testament, a choristic scheme separating the portions of these plays written by Marlowe from those written by Greene — the imitative Greene — my courage fails me. I demur to the assumption, to begin with, that, as the comic scenes in the two old plays could not be by Marlowe, they must be by Greene, whom Chettle, in his "Kind Hart's Dreme," averred to have been, "to no man's disgrace be it intended, the only Comedian, of a vulgar writer in this country." For Chettle may not have been carried away by the humours of the Armourer and his man, or by the grim fun of the Cade scenes; and the Cade scenes, in whosesoever manner they may be, are not in Greene's. I demur to the distribution of the tragic scenes between Marlowe and Peele, because of more or less superficial resemblances — "by Marlowe were certainly the Cardinal's death, the parting of Suffolk and Margaret." Or again — Marlowe took charge of Henry VI, because he resembles Mycetes and Edward II, and Greene of Edward IV, whom we may compare with James IV! Queen Margaret's words towards the close, it is more pointedly noted, bear some resemblance

to Queen Elinor's dying speeches in "Edward I." Mr. Grant White held that Shakespeare had undertaken Clifford and Warwick (curious that he of all men should have made the blunder, noted above, as to the Warwick badge!) and Mr. Rives faithfully followed suit in supposing the Queen's character to be of Shakespeare's devising. It seems to matter little that in the former two instances the characters were, so to speak, transferred bodily into "Henry VI," while in the latter case the part was extended almost throughout. The critic's consciousness is sufficient.

And so, I fear, the dubious question of the authorship of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie" must be left only half-answered. We certainly stand on firmer ground in discussing the authorship of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" themselves. For, as the figures show, of which the result was stated above, something between one-third and one-half of the whole number of lines in these Second and Third Parts were added to the text of the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie." According to Grant White's calculation, 1479 lines were taken over from the 3057 of the "Contention," and the still larger proportion of 1931 from the 2877 lines of the "True Tragedie." It is, therefore, of nearly one-half of the Second and Third Parts, taken together, that the authorship is in question. On the other hand, it has been seen that in the conduct of the action Part II and the first three acts of Part III exhibit no considerable variation from the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie"; and in the course of this Introduction it has been demonstrated, I think for the first time, how consistently as a whole, though with certain deviations of detail, the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" follow, step by step, and stage by

stage, the authorities of which the two old plays accepted the guidance. Yet it cannot be denied that the revision or re-editing of the old plays, and their transformation into the "Second and Third Parts of Henry VI" were carried out on a scale of elaborateness and thoroughness to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in dramatic or in any other kind of imaginative literature, unless in instances where a single mind has, like Goethe in his "Faust," evolved a masterpiece of his maturity out of fragmentary beginnings dating from his youth. The additions, omissions, and alterations which in the case of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" are generally improvements, amount to a renewal of the whole; though already Malone pointed out that the revisor or revisors proved true to their character as such by showing themselves to be not infallible, and indulging in transpositions and repetitions which occasionally, after the manner of revisions not carried through with perfect completeness and consistency, wear the aspect of patchwork. We have, therefore, in conclusion of this long disquisition, to ask who was the agent, or who were the agents, that converted the two old plays into dramatic works so notably superior in general proportion and in consequent effectiveness of form, as well as in abundance of striking detail.

Shakespeare would in any case be entitled to "preferential" consideration on this head; since even in our own day the authority of the First Folio is not to be lightly set aside. And I think that we are coming to recognise more clearly than ever, that the objections against extruding from such a canon any work which has been included, and has long remained included in it, are particularly strong where the canon, whatever its origin, has received a national acceptance. Indeed, in the present instance, no play has

been excluded from the Shakespearean canon with a predominant assent of critics, with the sole exception of "Titus Andronicus." If, in the last two lines of the passage already cited from the Epilogue to "Henry V" —

> "Which oft our stage has shown; and for their sake
> In your fair minds let this acceptance take" —

the words "for their sake" be considered to refer to at least two plays previously performed with success on the same stage as "Henry V," there can be no reasonable doubt but that the three Parts of "Henry VI" are in question. No doubt it would be strange that Shakespeare should describe as "our stage" a theatre other than the only one with which he is known to have been connected; but, if he was actually concerned with the plays themselves, the possessive pronoun might be held justifiable. And it is surely hypercritical to assert that the loss of France is really dealt with in Part I; for Part II at its opening is still concerned with the loss of Anjou and Maine, and even in Part III the consequences of the ill-management of the relations between England and France may be said to be still in progress; while Mr. Fleay's notion seems far-fetched, that the *their* in the penultimate line of the Epilogue refers to the *they* of the preceding line — *i. e.* to the personages who mismanaged the relations in question, and hence to the actors who represented those personages in "Henry VI" (only). But I do not think that the evidence of this passage, somewhat obscure as it is, can be allowed to count for much. On the other side we have the fact that Francis Meres, in his "Palladis Tamia" (1598), takes no notice of "Henry VI" — an omission which must go for what it is worth, but cannot be held to clinch the matter. Thus the external evidence as to Shakespeare's authorship of the

Second and Third Parts is, apart from the fact of their inclusion in the First Folio, unsatisfactory.

The internal evidence has been marshalled very effectively by Miss Jane Lee, and is worth re-stating, as, in my opinion at all events, its cumulative probability renders it virtually irresistible. In the first place, as to versification, she seems to me justified in disregarding the argument against Shakespeare's participation in these plays which have little rime, drawn from the fact that the earliest plays indisputably his ("The Comedy of Errors," "Love's Labour's Lost," &c.) have much; for these were not, as the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" are generally held to have been, founded on plays which themselves had little rime. On the other hand, Miss Lee points to things in the vocabulary of these plays which are distinctly Shakespearean — *e. g.* the use of the verb "to budge," of the retreat of an army; the verb "misthink"; the picturesque descriptive touch "blowing of his nails" (Third Part, Act II, sc. v, l. 3), which recurs in a song in "Love's Labour's Lost; and the occurrence of certain specially Shakespearean compounds.

But these are trifles.[1] The changes from the text

[1] I may take this opportunity of referring to a singular conjecture which has been advanced, but which will hardly carry conviction on the evidence furnished — viz., the unusual similes to be found in these plays from natural history and from the life and habits of animals — that an unknown writer who "specialized" in this direction ("a farmyard and menagerie man," as Dr. Furnivall humorously called him) had a hand in them. According to Miss Emma Phipson, who investigated the subject with remarkable assiduity, the number of natural history similes in the Second Part amounts to 49, and that in the Third Part to 53. They are partly the result of direct observation (or the assumption of it) of natural life in the country, partly artificial figures, borrowed from writers on natural (as it has wittily been termed, "unnatural natural") history, such above all as that which "Euphues" rendered fashionable and popular — and chiefly if not entirely derived by them from unscrupulously imaginative or reproductive writers of antiquity. Miss Phipson was at the pains of ascertaining that of the

of the earlier plays are at times singularly Shakespearean in their sudden revelation of the depths of human nature — so in the Duchess Eleanor's —

"Go, lead the way — I long to see my prison" —

(Second Part, Act II, last line); or in their life-like truthfulness, such as the few lines of talk between the murderers at the opening of Act III, sc. ii. It is just in such things as this, and in a vividness of characterisation — for which neither the fiery passion of Marlowe (who except in "Edward II" seems almost to go out of the way of drawing character) nor the unde-

dramatists who have with more or less reason been supposed to have contributed to the "Second and Third Parts of Henry VI" Peele's animal similes are not very numerous, and are mostly of the artificial kind; Greene's (it will be remembered that he continued "Euphues") also generally artificial, but of a more poetical kind than Peele's — and I may add that, with all his affectations, there are indications in Greene of a true appreciation of the charms of the country. He was very fond of introducing natural history similes into his writing; and Miss Lee aptly quotes Nashe in his "Have with ye to Saffron Walden," where, indignant at having been charged with imitating Greene, he exclaims: "Did I ever write of coney-catching? stufft my stile with hearbs and stones? . . . if not, how then did I imitate him?" The animal similes occurring in Marlowe, who was town-bred and lived in towns all his life, are scanty and euphuistic. Shakespeare, as we know and Mr. Rushton and others have shown, was largely indebted to "Euphues" as a writer, but he was also deeply indebted to his knowledge and observation of country life; he loved birds both as a poet and from his familiarity with them (see J. E. Hasting's "Ornithology of Shakespeare," 1871); and he is full of allusions to country sports (except fishing), and to that of hawking in particular, to which Miss Phipson has not found a single allusion in Peele, Greene, or Marlowe. The "Contention" contains some references to the use of birdlime; but the passage with which the first scene of Act II of the "Second Part of Henry VI" opens contains technical hawking terms not to be found in the corresponding passages of the "Contention." Speaking generally, though in "Henry VI" (so notably in scenes ii and iii of Act II. of Part II) the natural history similes for the most part lie close together; more than half of them are also to be found (with certain modifications) in the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie." The curious epithet (probably only an *epitheton ornans*), "empty" eagle, which occurs once in each "Part," is also found in Greene. Miss Phipson is of opinion that the similes, as they stand in the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie," give the impression of being Shakespeare's. See also as to parallel expressions of the same kind in Parts II and III of "Henry VI," and in "The Rape of Lucrece," the list given by Dr. Furnivall in the "New Shakspere Society's Transactions," 1876. pp. 312–313.

niable superficiality of Greene fitted the one or the other of them — that Shakespeare is so indescribably himself. And, although Part III adheres more closely to the play on which it is founded than Part II, and this very fact may account for the comparative fewness of the actual resemblances to Shakespeare contained in Part III, yet it is from this later play above all — the transition play proper — that is derived what seems to me one of the very strongest arguments in favor of the Shakespearean authorship of both parts. This consists in the unity of design between "Henry VI" and "Richard III" and in their exactly parallel use of the same historical sources — a twofold fact which must be regarded as convincing, unless of course we are again to resort to paradox and to treat the Richard of both "Henry VI" and "Richard III" not as Shakespeare's creation, but as his revision of Marlowe's.

For myself, a fresh reconsideration of the question has only served to confirm me in my previous conclusion that Shakespeare's participation in the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI," to which they owe the note of his genius as a possession forever, may be regarded as established; nor do I think that the work so admirably done by Miss Jane Lee need in this respect to be done over again. But I am not so well satisfied that Marlowe had a share with Shakespeare in the transformation of the two earlier plays into the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI." This is the last in the series of Miss Lee's conclusions, and she has supplemented it by elaborate tables in which she undertakes to distinguish, scene upon scene, and often part of scene upon part of scene, the passages which in her opinion represent Shakespeare's revisions of Marlowe, of Mar-

lowe and Greene, and of Greene only; as well as the much smaller number in which she holds Marlowe to have been the revisor, either alone or in company with Shakespeare, of the work of others or of himself. She avoids the supreme audacity of suggesting that any other writer, even Marlowe, in any instance, revised Shakespeare, although Marlowe, it must be remembered, was at the time the more celebrated playwright of the pair. I must say that into these final flights I cannot venture to follow Miss Lee; and I cannot suppress a regret that she should have essayed them, though it is a glorious vicinity which, if such be the case, has "sear'd her wings." For what evidence have we to allow us to hazard such a hypothesis as a cooperation between genius and genius, when we know absolutely nothing of the conditions under which it might have been exercised? It may no doubt be conjectured that the relations between Shakespeare and Marlowe were friendly — at least in so far as Shakespeare, we know, admired his brilliant fellow-writer; and there are a few passages in the plays which, unless we are to suppose that Marlowe imitated them, are directly taken from him.[1] But does this in any way prove them to have been inserted by himself? And, though Mr. Fleay's attribution to Marlowe's genius of scenes which seem to have a touch of it, such as those which make up Act III of Part

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[1] "These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre."
(Third Part, Act II, sc. v, l. 114; cf. "The Jew of Malta," sc. ii).

The phrase "He wears a duke's revenue on his back" (in the Second Part, Act I, sc. iii, l. 78) recurs with "lord's" instead of "duke's" in "Edward II" (Act I, sc. iv); and the less characteristic.

"And we are graced with fruits of victory"

occurs in just the same words both in the Third Part (Act V, sc. iii, l. 1), and in the "Massacre at Paris" (Act II, sc. vi).

II together with the first scene of Act IV is seductive, Miss Lee cannot refrain from assuming here the presence of Shakespeare's touch — the power of passion which he shared with Marlowe is tempered by a gnomic wisdom which belonged to Shakespeare alone. From Miss Lee's unproved theory of a revision by both poets, few, I think, will be prepared to go on to the view of Mr. Fleay, who excludes Shakespeare from any substantial share in the revision, and regards the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI," together with "Richard III," in its unrevised form, as essentially Peele's work. He argues that "Richard III" by its form of verse, by the absence from it of classical quotations, and in other respects, differs from "Henry VI"; that there are historical mistakes in "Henry VI" which do not occur in "Richard III" (*e.g.* in the Third Part the Prince of Wales marries Anne, who is called Warwick's eldest daughter, whereas in "Richard III" she is rightly called his youngest). These discrepancies, he thinks, show that there were different supervisors; and he accordingly comes to the conclusion that Peele at his death (before 1598) left behind him the unfinished trilogy of "Richard III" (consisting of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" and of "Richard III"); that Shakespeare finished the former by adding the three battle-scenes (ii, iii, iv) of Act V of the Third Part; and that it was produced by the Lord Chamberlain's company. Marlowe, he considers, and Marlowe alone, had revised the "Whole Contention," just as Shakespeare revised the First Part of "Henry VI," adding to Peele's part of the work. Grant White has pointed out how much in "Richard III" ("which . . . although it is the greatest favourite of all his histories on the stage, is yet the poorest and

thinnest in thought, the least harmonious in rhythm — in a word, the least Shakespearean of them all") is to be found that resembles Marlowe and Peele, especially the latter. We may readily agree that when writing "Richard III" Shakespeare had not yet found his most truly original style and manner, of which the first full exemplification is to be found in "Richard II"; his processes were still in a large measure imitative; but it is a long step from this — and a step which I for one decline to take — to argue that "Richard III" was not essentially his own handiwork.

I am willing, as I stated above, to allow it to be quite possible that Marlowe and Greene, the latter more especially, contributed to the "Contention" and the "True Tragedie," and that Peele may conceivably also have had a hand in them. But while I see no reason for attributing the conception of Richard of Gloucester to Peele — from whose hand we have no character approaching this in dramatic force — I am less disposed than I formerly was to consider a revision by or with the coöperation of Marlowe to be an assumption necessary in order to account for the revision of the two old plays which transformed them into the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI." This assumption implies another to which I cannot bring myself to assent, viz., that Shakespeare's 'prentice hand, fortified by his consciousness of what was to follow — "Richard III" — was unequal to the task of the revision of the two old plays, if (as we certainly cannot prove) this task was imposed upon him. The belief that Shakespeare, although a beginner, was capable of accomplishing it, by no means contradicts the probability that a strong influence was exercised upon Shakespeare as the revisor of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI," and as the writer of "Rich-

ard III," by Marlowe, and also by Peele. In the former case the probability is indeed to all intents and purposes a certainty. Marlowe — the one great imaginative poet among the predecessors of Shakespeare — the one dramatic poet in whom there burnt the fire of passion, and whose thoughts were winged with aspirations that made them soar into the infinite — the one Promethean soul in face of an Olympus of limited ambitions — how could such a writer have left unaffected and uninfluenced the most receptive, the most intelligent, the most sympathetic of his younger contemporaries? Or was Shakespeare not great enough to absorb into his creative activity the spirit of Marlowe — as Goethe in his period of Storm and Stress absorbed into his genius the spirit — far less powerful than Marlowe's — of a Klinger or a Lenz? That is the question which those who are, like myself, unwilling to assume a direct coöperation of Marlowe with Shakespeare in this "revision" are unwilling to answer by a timid negative. For my part, I am still unable to see why the Second and Third Parts of "Henry VI" are not, together with the First, to be legitimately included, as Hemynge and Condell included them, among the works of Shakespeare — and this in a sense in which they could be included among the works of no other English dramatist.

A. W. Ward.

THE THIRD PART OF KING HENRY VI

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

KING HENRY the Sixth.
EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES, his son.
LEWIS XI. KING OF FRANCE.
DUKE OF SOMERSET.
DUKE OF EXETER.
EARL OF OXFORD.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND.
EARL OF WESTMORELAND.
LORD CLIFFORD.
RICHARD PLANTAGENET, Duke of York.
EDWARD, Earl of March, afterwards King Edward IV.,
EDMUND, Earl of Rutland,
GEORGE, afterwards Duke of Clarence,
RICHARD, afterwards Duke of Gloucester,
} his sons.
DUKE OF NORFOLK.
MARQUESS OF MONTAGUE.
EARL OF WARWICK.
EARL OF PEMBROKE.
LORD HASTINGS.
LORD STAFFORD.
SIR JOHN MORTIMER,
SIR HUGH MORTIMER,
} uncles to the Duke of York.
HENRY, Earl of Richmond, a youth.
LORD RIVERS, brother to Lady Grey.
SIR WILLIAM STANLEY.
SIR JOHN MONTGOMERY.
SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE.
Tutor to Rutland. Mayor of York.
Lieutenant of the Tower. A Nobleman.
Two Keepers. A Huntsman.
A Son that has killed his father.
A Father that has killed his son.

QUEEN MARGARET.
LADY GREY, afterwards Queen to Edward IV.
BONA, sister to the French Queen.

Soldiers, Attendants, Messengers, Watchmen, &c.

SCENE: *England and France*

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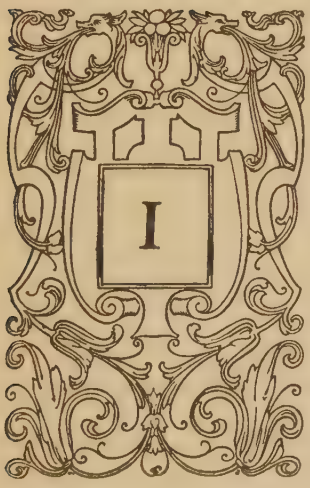
[1] This play was first printed in its present form in the First Folio of 1623. But it had already been published in an unrevised draft in 1595 under the title of *The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the Death of good King Henrie the Sixth*, in a quarto volume, which was reprinted in 1600 and 1619. The Quartos have no divisions into acts or scenes. The Folio has the single heading at the opening of the play, "Actus Primus Scœna Prima." Rowe inserted in 1709 full division into "acts" and "scenes," a list of the "dramatis personæ," and indications of the "Scene."

ACT FIRST — SCENE I — LONDON

THE PARLIAMENT-HOUSE

Alarum. *Enter the* DUKE OF YORK, EDWARD, RICHARD, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, WARWICK, *and* Soldiers

WARWICK



I WONDER HOW THE KING escaped our hands.

YORK. While we pursued the horsemen of the north,
He slily stole away and left his men:
Whereat the great Lord of Northumberland,
Whose warlike ears could never brook retreat,
Cheer'd up the drooping army; and himself,
Lord Clifford and Lord Stafford, all a-breast,
Charged our main battle's front, and breaking in
Were by the swords of common soldiers slain.

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1 *I wonder . . . hands*] The dramatist represents the events of this scene as immediately following the battle of St. Albans, May 23, 1455,

EDW. Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,
Is either slain or wounded dangerously;
I cleft his beaver with a downright blow:
That this is true, father, behold his blood.
MONT. And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,
Whom I encounter'd as the battles join'd.
RICH. Speak thou for me and tell them what I did.
[*Throwing down the Duke of Somerset's head.*
YORK. Richard hath best deserved of all my sons.
But is your grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?
NORF. Such hope have all the line of John of Gaunt!
RICH. Thus do I hope to shake King Henry's head.
WAR. And so do I. Victorious Prince of York,
Before I see thee seated in that throne

with which the Second Part ends. As a matter of history, there was an interval of five years between the battle and this meeting in the Parliament-house (on October 7, 1460), which is described in this scene.

7 *Lord Clifford*] This account of Lord Clifford's death, which accords with history, differs from that already given in *2 Hen. VI*, V, iii, 13–28; see I, iii, 5, *infra*.

8 *main battle*] the centre or main body of the army.

12 *beaver*] the lower portion of the "faceguard" of a helmet; here used for the whole helmet.

14 *brother*] Here, as at line 116 and I, ii, 4, 55, and 60, *infra*, the speaker, John Neville, Marquess of Montague, is inaccurately represented as brother of the Duke of York, who was merely his uncle by marriage; the Duke's wife was sister of Montague's father. Montague was brother of the Earl of Warwick.

15 *the battles join'd*] the armies joined battle. Cf. II, i, 121, *infra*.

17 *Richard . . . sons*] Historically, Richard, the Duke of York's youngest son, was now only eight years old. See *2 Hen. VI*, V, i, 111 *seq.*

Which now the house of Lancaster usurps,
I vow by heaven these eyes shall never close.
This is the palace of the fearful king,
And this the regal seat: possess it, York;
For this is thine, and not King Henry's heirs'.
YORK. Assist me, then, sweet Warwick, and I will;
For hither we have broken in by force.
NORF. We'll all assist you; he that flies shall die.
YORK. Thanks, gentle Norfolk: stay by me, my lords;
And, soldiers, stay and lodge by me this night.
[*They go up.*
WAR. And when the king comes, offer him no violence,
Unless he seek to thrust you out perforce.
YORK. The queen this day here holds her parliament,
But little thinks we shall be of her council:
By words or blows here let us win our right.
RICH. Arm'd as we are, let's stay within this house.
WAR. The bloody parliament shall this be call'd,
Unless Plantagenet, Duke of York, be king,
And bashful Henry deposed, whose cowardice
Hath made us by-words to our enemies.
YORK. Then leave me not, my lords; be resolute:
I mean to take possession of my right.
WAR. Neither the king, nor he that loves him best,
The proudest he that holds up Lancaster,
Dares stir a wing, if Warwick shake his bells.

46 *The proudest he . . . up*] The proudest man or person who upholds. Cf. II, ii, 97, *infra:* "any *he the proudest.*"

47 *Dares . . . bells*] Warwick is likened to a falcon to whose legs in the sport of hawking bells were attached, the sound of which made

I'll plant Plantagenet, root him up who dares:
Resolve thee, Richard; claim the English crown.

Flourish. *Enter* KING HENRY, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, WESTMORELAND, EXETER, *and the rest*

K. HEN. My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits,
Even in the chair of state: belike he means,
Back'd by the power of Warwick, that false peer,
To aspire unto the crown and reign as king.
Earl of Northumberland, he slew thy father,
And thine, Lord Clifford; and you both have vow'd revenge
On him, his sons, his favourites and his friends.
NORTH. If I be not, heavens be revenged on me!
CLIF. The hope thereof makes Clifford mourn in steel.
WEST. What, shall we suffer this? let's pluck him down:
My heart for anger burns; I cannot brook it.
K. HEN. Be patient, gentle Earl of Westmoreland.
CLIF. Patience is for poltroons, such as he:
He durst not sit there, had your father lived.
My gracious lord, here in the parliament
Let us assail the family of York.
NORTH. Well hast thou spoken, cousin: be it so.
K. HEN. Ah, know you not the city favours them,
And they have troops of soldiers at their beck?
EXE. But when the duke is slain, they'll quickly fly.

---

the birds of the chase afraid to rise. Cf. *Lucrece*, 511: "With trembling fear, as fowl hear *falcon's bells*."

62 *Patience*] A trisyllable; "poltroons" is accented on the first syllable.

K. Hen. Far be the thought of this from Henry's heart,
To make a shambles of the parliament-house!
Cousin of Exeter, frowns, words and threats
Shall be the war that Henry means to use.
Thou factious Duke of York, descend my throne,
And kneel for grace and mercy at my feet;
I am thy sovereign.

York. I am thine.

Exe. For shame, come down: he made thee Duke of York.

York. 'T was my inheritance, as the earldom was.

Exe. Thy father was a traitor to the crown.

War. Exeter, thou art a traitor to the crown,
In following this usurping Henry.

Clif. Whom should he follow but his natural king?

War. True, Clifford; and that's Richard Duke of York.

K. Hen. And shall I stand, and thou sit in my throne?

York. It must and shall be so: content thyself.

War. Be Duke of Lancaster; let him be king.

78–79 *'T was my inheritance . . . crown*] The earldom (of March) was inherited by York from his mother Anne Mortimer, daughter of Roger, Earl of March (see line 106, *infra*), who was great-grandson of Edward III. It was through his mother that York claimed the throne. To his dukedom of York he succeeded on the death at Agincourt in 1415 of his father's brother Edward, 2d Duke of York, son of Edmund (Langley), 1st Duke of York, fifth son of Edward III. His father Richard, Earl of Cambridge, the traitor to Henry V (see *Hen. V*, II, ii), never held the dukedom. Cf. line 105, *infra*.

WEST. He is both king and Duke of Lancaster;
And that the Lord of Westmoreland shall maintain.
WAR. And Warwick shall disprove it. You forget
That we are those which chased you from the field,
And slew your fathers, and with colours spread
March'd through the city to the palace gates.
NORTH. Yes, Warwick, I remember it to my grief;
And, by his soul, thou and thy house shall rue it.
WEST. Plantagenet, of thee and these thy sons,
Thy kinsmen and thy friends, I'll have more lives
Than drops of blood were in my father's veins.
CLIF. Urge it no more; lest that, instead of words,
I send thee, Warwick, such a messenger
As shall revenge his death before I stir.
WAR. Poor Clifford! how I scorn his worthless threats!
YORK. Will you we show our title to the crown?
If not, our swords shall plead it in the field.
K. HEN. What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown?
Thy father was, as thou art, Duke of York;
Thy grandfather, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March:
I am the son of Henry the Fifth,
Who made the dauphin and the French to stoop,
And seized upon their towns and provinces.
WAR. Talk not of France, sith thou hast lost it all.
K. HEN. The lord protector lost it, and not I:
When I was crown'd I was but nine months old.
RICH. You are old enough now, and yet, methinks, you lose.
Father, tear the crown from the usurper's head.

105 *Thy father . . . York*] This is an error. See note on 78–79, *supra*.

EDW. Sweet father, do so; set it on your head.
MONT. Good brother, as thou lovest and honourest arms,
Let's fight it out and not stand cavilling thus.
RICH. Sound drums and trumpets, and the king will fly.
YORK. Sons, peace!
K. HEN. Peace, thou! and give King Henry leave to speak.
WAR. Plantagenet shall speak first: hear him, lords;
And be you silent and attentive too,
For he that interrupts him shall not live.
K. HEN. Think'st thou that I will leave my kingly throne,
Wherein my grandsire and my father sat?
No: first shall war unpeople this my realm;
Ay, and their colours, often borne in France,
And now in England to our heart's great sorrow,
Shall be my winding-sheet. Why faint you, lords?
My title's good, and better far than his.
WAR. Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.
K. HEN. Henry the Fourth by conquest got the crown.
YORK. 'T was by rebellion against his king.
K. HEN. [*Aside*] I know not what to say; my title's weak.
Tell me, may not a king adopt an heir?
YORK. What then?

---

116 *brother*] See note on line 14, *supra*, and cf. I, ii, 4, 55, and 60, *infra*.

K. Hen. An if he may, then am I lawful king;
For Richard, in the view of many lords,
Resign'd the crown to Henry the Fourth,
Whose heir my father was, and I am his.
York. He rose against him, being his sovereign,
And made him to resign his crown perforce.
War. Suppose, my lords, he did it unconstrain'd,
Think you 't were prejudicial to his crown?
Exe. No; for he could not so resign his crown
But that the next heir should succeed and reign.
K. Hen. Art thou against us, Duke of Exeter?
Exe. His is the right, and therefore pardon me.
York. Why whisper you, my lords, and answer not?
Exe. My conscience tells me he is lawful king.
K. Hen. [*Aside*] All will revolt from me, and turn to him.
North. Plantagenet, for all the claim thou lay'st,
Think not that Henry shall be so deposed.
War. Deposed he shall be, in despite of all.
North. Thou art deceived: 't is not thy southern power,
Of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, nor of Kent,
Which makes thee thus presumptuous and proud,
Can set the duke up in despite of me.
Clif. King Henry, be thy title right or wrong,
Lord Clifford vows to fight in thy defence:
May that ground gape and swallow me alive,
Where I shall kneel to him that slew my father!

144 *prejudicial to his crown*] detrimental to the throne, injurious to the prerogative of monarchy.

K. Hen. O Clifford, how thy words revive my heart!
York. Henry of Lancaster, resign thy crown.
What mutter you, or what conspire you, lords?
War. Do right unto this princely Duke of York,
Or I will fill the house with armed men,
And over the chair of state, where now he sits,
Write up his title with usurping blood.
[*He stamps with his foot, and the Soldiers show themselves.*
K. Hen. My lord of Warwick, hear me but one word:
Let me for this my life-time reign as king.
York. Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs,
And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou livest.
King. I am content: Richard Plantagenet,
Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.
Clif. What wrong is this unto the prince your son!
War. What good is this to England and himself!
West. Base, fearful and despairing Henry!
Clif. How hast thou injured both thyself and us!
West. I cannot stay to hear these articles.
North. Nor I.
Clif. Come, cousin, let us tell the queen these news.
West. Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate king,
In whose cold blood no spark of honour bides.
North. Be thou a prey unto the house of York,
And die in bands for this unmanly deed!
Clif. In dreadful war mayst thou be overcome,
Or live in peace abandon'd and despised!
[*Exeunt North., Cliff., and West.*

---

186 *in bands*] in bonds, in imprisonment. Cf. Marlowe's *Edward II*, III, i, 3: "weaponless must I fall and die *in bands*."

WAR. Turn this way, Henry, and regard them not.
EXE. They seek revenge and therefore will not yield.
K. HEN. Ah, Exeter!
WAR. Why should you sigh, my lord?
K. HEN. Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,
Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit.
But be it as it may: I here entail
The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever;
Conditionally, that here thou take an oath
To cease this civil war, and, whilst I live,
To honour me as thy king and sovereign,
And neither by treason nor hostility
To seek to put me down and reign thyself.
YORK. This oath I willingly take and will perform.
WAR. Long live King Henry! Plantagenet, embrace him.
K. HEN. And long live thou and these thy forward sons!
YORK. Now York and Lancaster are reconciled.
EXE. Accursed be he that seeks to make them foes!
[*Sennet. Here they come down.*
YORK. Farewell, my gracious lord; I'll to my castle.
WAR. And I'll keep London with my soldiers.
NORF. And I to Norfolk with my followers.

---

205 (stage direction) *Sennet . . . down*] The sennet is a flourish played on a trumpet. The speakers here apparently descend from the dais, on which the throne stands. Capell substitutes for this stage direction, *Flourish; and the Lords come forward.*

206 *my castle*] Sandal Castle near Wakefield, in Yorkshire, where the next scene takes place.

MONT. And I unto the sea from whence I came.

[Exeunt York and his Sons, Warwick, Norfolk, Montague, their Soldiers, and Attendants.

K. HEN. And I, with grief and sorrow, to the court.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET *and the* PRINCE OF WALES

EXE. Here comes the queen, whose looks bewray her anger:
I'll steal away.

K. HEN. Exeter, so will I.

Q. MAR. Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee.

K. HEN. Be patient, gentle queen, and I will stay.

Q. MAR. Who can be patient in such extremes?
Ah, wretched man! would I had died a maid,
And never seen thee, never borne thee son,
Seeing thou hast proved so unnatural a father!
Hath he deserved to lose his birthright thus?
Hadst thou but loved him half so well as I,
Or felt that pain which I did for him once,
Or nourish'd him as I did with my blood,
Thou wouldst have left thy dearest heart-blood there,
Rather than have made that savage duke thine heir,
And disinherited thine only son.

PRINCE. Father, you cannot disinherit me:
If you be king, why should not I succeed?

K. HEN. Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me, sweet son:
The Earl of Warwick and the duke enforced me.

Q. MAR. Enforced thee! art thou king, and wilt be forced?
I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!

Thou hast undone thyself, thy son, and me;
And given unto the house of York such head,
As thou shalt reign but by their sufferance.
To entail him and his heirs unto the crown,
What is it, but to make thy sepulchre,
And creep into it far before thy time?
Warwick is chancellor and the lord of Calais;
Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas;
The duke is made protector of the realm;
And yet shalt thou be safe? such safety finds
The trembling lamb environed with wolves.
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,
The soldiers should have toss'd me on their pikes,
Before I would have granted to that act.
But thou preferr'st thy life before thine honour:
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,
Until that act of parliament be repeal'd,

233 *given . . . such head*] given such rein, such liberty (as of a horse).

239 *Stern Falconbridge . . . seas*] Inaccurate reference is here made to Thomas, commonly called the Bastard of Falconbridge, natural son of Warwick's uncle, William Neville, Earl of Kent, and Baron Falconbridge. The command of the narrow seas (*i. e.*, St. George's Channel between Dover and Calais) was not bestowed on the Bastard of Falconbridge at the period of this scene, but nearly eleven years later, in 1471, when he supported the Earl of Warwick in his defection from the cause of Edward IV, he was by the Earl made "Captain of his navy." When "the narrow seas" are mentioned again, IV, viii, 3, *infra*, the term is applied to the passage between England and Holland. But St. George's Channel is usually intended. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, II, viii, 28–29: "*the narrow seas*, that part The French and English."

Whereby my son is disinherited.
The northern lords that have forsworn thy colours
Will follow mine, if once they see them spread;
And spread they shall be, to thy foul disgrace
And utter ruin of the house of York.
Thus do I leave thee. Come, son, let's away;
Our army is ready; come, we'll after them.

K. HEN. Stay, gentle Margaret, and hear me speak.

Q. MAR. Thou hast spoke too much already: get thee gone.

K. HEN. Gentle son Edward, thou wilt stay with me?

Q. MAR. Ay, to be murder'd by his enemies.

PRINCE. When I return with victory from the field
I'll see your grace: till then I'll follow her.

Q. MAR. Come, son, away; we may not linger thus.

[*Exeunt Queen Margaret and the Prince.*

K. HEN. Poor queen! how love to me and to her son
Hath made her break out into terms of rage!
Revenged may she be on that hateful duke,
Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire,
Will cost my crown, and like an empty eagle
Tire on the flesh of me and of my son!

---

268 *cost*] cost me. This is the Folio reading. Numerous emendations have been suggested, *e. g.*, *truss* (Hanmer), *souse* (Dyce), *cote* (Steevens), *coast* (Warburton); "truss" and "souse" are terms in falconry, implying a swift plunge of the hawk on the flying prey; "cote" and "coast" are both met with in the sense of "overtake" or "come up with." No change seems essential.

268–269 *an empty eagle Tire*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 55–56: "*an empty eagle*, sharp by fast, *Tires* [*i. e.*, feeds ravenously] with her beak *on* feathers, *flesh* and bone."

The loss of those three lords torments my heart:
I'll write unto them and entreat them fair.
Come, cousin, you shall be the messenger.
EXE. And I, I hope, shall reconcile them all. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — SANDAL CASTLE

Enter RICHARD, EDWARD, *and* MONTAGUE

RICH. Brother, though I be youngest, give me leave.
EDW. No, I can better play the orator.
MONT. But I have reasons strong and forcible.

Enter the DUKE OF YORK

YORK. Why, how now, sons and brother! at a strife?
What is your quarrel? how began it first?
EDW. No quarrel, but a slight contention.
YORK. About what?
RICH. About that which concerns your grace and us;
The crown of England, father, which is yours.
YORK. Mine, boy? not till King Henry be dead.
RICH. Your right depends not on his life or death.
EDW. Now you are heir, therefore enjoy it now:
By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe,
It will outrun you, father, in the end.

---

4 *and brother*] See note on I, i, 14, *supra*.

YORK. I took an oath that he should quietly reign.
EDW. But for a kingdom any oath may be broken:
I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year.
RICH. No; God forbid your grace should be forsworn.
YORK. I shall be, if I claim by open war.
RICH. I'll prove the contrary, if you'll hear me speak.
YORK. Thou canst not, son; it is impossible.
RICH. An oath is of no moment, being not took
Before a true and lawful magistrate,
That hath authority over him that swears:
Henry had none, but did usurp the place;
Then, seeing 't was he that made you to depose,
Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous.
Therefore, to arms! And, father, do but think
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown;
Within whose circuit is Elysium,
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.
Why do we linger thus? I cannot rest
Until the white rose that I wear be dyed
Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart.
YORK. Richard, enough; I will be king, or die.
Brother, thou shalt to London presently,
And whet on Warwick to this enterprise.
Thou, Richard, shalt to the Duke of Norfolk,
And tell him privily of our intent.
You, Edward, shall unto my Lord Cobham,
With whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise:
In them I trust; for they are soldiers,

Witty, courteous, liberal, full of spirit.
While you are thus employ'd, what resteth more,
But that I seek occasion how to rise,
And yet the king not privy to my drift,
Nor any of the house of Lancaster?

Enter a Messenger

But, stay: what news? Why comest thou in such post?

MESS. The queen with all the northern earls and lords
Intend here to besiege you in your castle:
She is hard by with twenty thousand men;
And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

YORK. Ay, with my sword. What! think'st thou that we fear them?
Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me;
My brother Montague shall post to London:
Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest,

---

43 *Witty*] Intelligent. Thus the original editions. Theobald substituted *Wealthy*.

48 (stage direction) *Enter a Messenger*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Enter Gabriel*, and give the messenger's speech below (ll. 49–52) to "Gabriel." "Gabriel" was doubtless the name of the actor who filled the part. Cf. III, i, 1, *infra*. Gabriel Spencer was the actor whom Ben Jonson killed in a duel on September 22, 1598. Heywood in his *Apology for Actors* (1612) respectfully mentions "Gabriel" with four other actors, who, though dead, enjoyed great posthumous reputations (*Shakesp. Society Reprint*, p. 43).

post] post-haste. Cf. III, iii, 222, and V, v, 84, *infra*.

55 and 60 *brother*] See note on I, i, 14, *supra*.

Whom we have left protectors of the king,
With powerful policy strengthen themselves,
And trust not simple Henry nor his oaths.
MONT. Brother, I go; I'll win them, fear it not:
And thus most humbly I do take my leave. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR JOHN MORTIMER *and* SIR HUGH MORTIMER

YORK. Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, mine uncles,
You are come to Sandal in a happy hour;
The army of the queen mean to besiege us.
SIR JOHN. She shall not need; we'll meet her in the field.
YORK. What, with five thousand men?
RICH. Ay, with five hundred, father, for a need:
A woman's general; what should we fear?
[*A march afar off.*
EDW. I hear their drums: let's set our men in order,
And issue forth and bid them battle straight.
YORK. Five men to twenty! though the odds be great,
I doubt not, uncle, of our victory.
Many a battle have I won in France,
When as the enemy hath been ten to one:
Why should I not now have the like success?
[*Alarum. Exeunt.*

62 *Sir John . . . Hugh*] These knights were illegitimate sons of York's maternal grandfather, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March. Holinshed calls them York's "bastard uncles." See I, iv, 2, *infra.*

SCENE III — FIELD OF BATTLE BETWIXT SANDAL CASTLE AND WAKEFIELD

Alarums — Enter RUTLAND *and his* Tutor

RUT. Ah, whither shall I fly to 'scape their hands?
Ah, tutor, look where bloody Clifford comes!

Enter CLIFFORD *and* Soldiers

CLIF. Chaplain, away! thy priesthood saves thy life.
As for the brat of this accursed duke,
Whose father slew my father, he shall die.
TUT. And I, my lord, will bear him company.
CLIF. Soldiers, away with him!
TUT. Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child,
Lest thou be hated both of God and man!
[Exit, dragged off by Soldiers.
CLIF. How now! is he dead already? or is it fear
That makes him close his eyes? I'll open them.
RUT. So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch
That trembles under his devouring paws;
And so he walks, insulting o'er his prey,
And so he comes, to rend his limbs asunder.
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,
And not with such a cruel threatening look.

---

5 *Whose*] The antecedent is "brat." The young Earl of Rutland was third son of the Duke of York, who slew "young" Clifford's father at the battle of St. Albans, according to *2 Hen. VI*, V, iii, 13–28; but cf. *supra* I, i, 7.

12 *pent-up*] long confined without food.

Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die.
I am too mean a subject for thy wrath:
Be thou revenged on men, and let me live.
CLIF. In vain thou speak'st, poor boy; my father's blood
Hath stopp'd the passage where thy words should enter.
RUT. Then let my father's blood open it again:
He is a man, and, Clifford, cope with him.
CLIF. Had I thy brethren here, their lives and thine
Were not revenge sufficient for me;
No, if I digg'd up thy forefathers' graves,
And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,
It could not slake mine ire, nor ease my heart.
The sight of any of the house of York
Is as a fury to torment my soul;
And till I root out their accursed line
And leave not one alive, I live in hell.
Therefore — [*Lifting his hand.*
RUT. O, let me pray before I take my death!
To thee I pray; sweet Clifford, pity me!
CLIF. Such pity as my rapier's point affords.
RUT. I never did thee harm: why wilt thou slay me?
CLIF. Thy father hath.
RUT. But 't was ere I was born.
Thou hast one son; for his sake pity me,

39 *But . . . born*] This is an error. The speaker, who was slain in his eighteenth year, was in his thirteenth year when his father, the Duke of York, is alleged to have slain Clifford's father. Hall and Holinshed state in error that Rutland was twelve at the date of his death.

Lest in revenge thereof, sith God is just,
He be as miserably slain as I.
Ah, let me live in prison all my days;
And when I give occasion of offence,
Then let me die, for now thou hast no cause.
CLIF. No cause!
Thy father slew my father; therefore, die. [*Stabs him.*
RUT. Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuæ! [*Dies.*
CLIF. Plantagenet! I come, Plantagenet!
And this thy son's blood cleaving to my blade
Shall rust upon my weapon, till thy blood,
Congeal'd with this, do make me wipe off both. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Alarum. Enter RICHARD, Duke of York

YORK. The army of the queen hath got the field:
My uncles both are slain in rescuing me;
And all my followers to the eager foe
Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind,
Or lambs pursued by hunger-starved wolves.
My sons, God knows what hath bechanced them:
But this I know, they have demean'd themselves

48 *Di . . . tuæ!*] From Ovid's *Heroides*, Phyllis to Demophoon, II, 66: "God grant this may be the height of your glory."

2 *My uncles . . . rescuing me*] According to Holinshed, Sir John Mortimer and Sir Hugh Mortimer (see I, ii, 62 *seq.*, *supra*) were slain in the general fight within the same "half an houre" as York and other "of his trustie freends" at this battle of Wakefield.

Like men born to renown by life or death.
Three times did Richard make a lane to me,
And thrice cried "Courage, father! fight it out!"
And full as oft came Edward to my side,
With purple falchion, painted to the hilt
In blood of those that had encounter'd him:
And when the hardiest warriors did retire,
Richard cried, "Charge! and give no foot of ground!"
And cried, "A crown, or else a glorious tomb!
A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!"
With this, we charged again: but, out, alas!
We bodged again; as I have seen a swan
With bootless labour swim against the tide
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.

[*A short alarum within.*

Ah, hark! the fatal followers do pursue;
And I am faint, and cannot fly their fury:
And were I strong, I would not shun their fury:
The sands are number'd that make up my life;
Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, *the* young Prince, *and* Soldiers

Come, bloody Clifford, rough Northumberland,
I dare your quenchless fury to more rage:
I am your butt, and I abide your shot.

NORTH. Yield to our mercy, proud Plantagenet.

CLIF. Ay, to such mercy as his ruthless arm,
With downright payment, show'd unto my father.

19 *bodged*] gave ground; a variant form of "budged."

Now Phaëthon hath tumbled from his car,
And made an evening at the noontide prick.
YORK. My ashes, as the phœnix, may bring forth
A bird that will revenge upon you all:
And in that hope I throw mine eyes to heaven,
Scorning whate'er you can afflict me with.
Why come you not? what! multitudes, and fear?
CLIF. So cowards fight when they can fly no further;
So doves do peck the falcon's piercing talons;
So desperate thieves, all hopeless of their lives,
Breathe out invectives 'gainst the officers.
YORK. O Clifford, but bethink thee once again,
And in thy thought o'er-run my former time;
And, if thou canst for blushing, view this face,
And bite thy tongue, that slanders him with cowardice
Whose frown hath made thee faint and fly ere this!
CLIF. I will not bandy thee with word for word,
But buckle with thee blows, twice two for one.
Q. MAR. Hold, valiant Clifford! for a thousand causes
I would prolong awhile the traitor's life.
Wrath makes him deaf: speak thou, Northumberland.
NORTH. Hold, Clifford! do not honour him so much
To prick thy finger, though to wound his heart:
What valour were it, when a cur doth grin,
For one to thrust his hand between his teeth,
When he might spurn him with his foot away?

---

34 *noontide prick*] mark of noon on the dial's face. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 128: "the *prick of noon*," and *Lucrece*, 781: "Ere he arrive his weary *noontide prick*."

It is war's prize to take all vantages;
And ten to one is no impeach of valour.

[*They lay hands on York, who struggles.*

CLIF. Ay, ay, so strives the woodcock with the gin.

NORTH. So doth the cony struggle in the net.

YORK. So triumph thieves upon their conquer'd booty;
So true men yield, with robbers so o'er-match'd.

NORTH. What would your grace have done unto him now?

Q. MAR. Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland,
Come, make him stand upon this molehill here,
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.
What! was it you that would be England's king?
Was 't you that revell'd in our parliament,
And made a preachment of your high descent?
Where are your mess of sons to back you now?
The wanton Edward, and the lusty George?
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,
Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with the blood
That valiant Clifford, with his rapier's point,
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;

68 *raught*] the old preterite of "reach." Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, II, iii, 43.

69 *parted . . . hand*] divided merely the shadow, failed to touch the substance.

73 *mess*] a party or company of four persons. See *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 203, and note.

And if thine eyes can water for his death,
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.
Alas, poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,
I should lament thy miserable state.
I prithee, grieve, to make me merry, York.
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?
Why art thou patient, man? thou shouldst be mad;
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.
Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport:
York cannot speak, unless he wear a crown.
A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:
Hold you his hands, whilst I do set it on.
[*Putting a paper crown on his head.*
Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!
Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair;
And this is he was his adopted heir.
But how is it that great Plantagenet
Is crown'd so soon, and broke his solemn oath?
As I bethink me, you should not be king
Till our King Henry had shook hands with death.
And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,
And rob his temples of the diadem,
Now in his life, against your holy oath?
O, 't is a fault too too unpardonable!
Off with the crown; and, with the crown, his head;
And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

103 *pale*] encircle as with a pale or paling.
108 *do him dead*] put him to death. Cf. III, iii, 103: "done to death."

CLIF. That is my office, for my father's sake.
Q. MAR. Nay, stay; let's hear the orisons he makes.
YORK. She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex
To triumph, like an Amazonian trull,
Upon their woes whom fortune captivates!
But that thy face is, visard-like, unchanging,
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,
I would essay, proud queen, to make thee blush.
To tell thee whence thou camest, of whom derived,
Were shame enough to shame thee, wert thou not shameless.
Thy father bears the type of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicils and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman.
Hath that poor monarch taught thee to insult?
It needs not, nor it boots thee not, proud queen,
Unless the adage must be verified,
That beggars mounted run their horse to death.
'T is beauty that doth oft make women proud;
But, God He knows, thy share thereof is small:
'T is virtue that doth make them most admired;
The contrary doth make thee wonder'd at:

110 *orisons*] prayers. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, i, 89–90: "in thy *orisons* Be all my sins remember'd."

115 *captivates*] makes captive.

122 *the Sicils*] the two kingdoms of Sicily, — Naples and Sicily, — to both of which Queen Margaret's father preferred a nominal claim. Cf. V, vii, 39, *infra*.

'T is government that makes them seem divine;
The want thereof makes thee abominable:
Thou art as opposite to every good
As the Antipodes are unto us,
Or as the south to the septentrion.
O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide!
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
And yet be seen to bear a woman's face? 140
Women are soft, mild, pitiful and flexible;
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Bid'st thou me rage? why, now thou hast thy wish:
Wouldst have me weep? why, now thou hast thy will:
For raging wind blows up incessant showers,
And when the rage allays, the rain begins.
These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies:
And every drop cries vengeance for his death,
'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false Frenchwoman.

132 *government*] behaviour, self-control.

136 *septentrion*] the north. Cf. Greene's *Mourning Garment*, 1590 (ed. Grosart, IX, 136): "the *septentrionall* cloudes that freeze," and Milton, *Parad. Reg.*, IV, 31: "cold *septentrion* blasts."

137 *O tiger's heart . . . hide!*] Parodied by Robert Greene in his *Groats-worth of Wit*, 1592, in the familiar passage maliciously attacking Shakespeare: "There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you."

145–146 *For raging wind . . . rain begins*] Cf. II, v, 85–86, *infra*, and *Lucrece*, 1788–1791: "This *windy* tempest, till it *blow up rain*, Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more; At last *it rains, and busy winds give o'er:* Then son and father weep with equal strife."

NORTH. Beshrew me, but his passion moves me so
That hardly can I check my eyes from tears.
YORK. That face of his the hungry cannibals
Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with blood:
But you are more inhuman, more inexorable,
O, ten times more, than tigers of Hyrcania.
See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears:
This cloth thou dip'dst in blood of my sweet boy,
And I with tears do wash the blood away.
Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this:
And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,
Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears;
Yea, even my foes will shed fast-falling tears,
And say "Alas, it was a piteous deed!"
There, take the crown, and, with the crown, my curse;
And in thy need such comfort come to thee
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world:
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads!
NORTH. Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,
I should not for my life but weep with him,
To see how inly sorrow gripes his soul.
Q. MAR. What, weeping-ripe, my Lord Northumberland?
Think but upon the wrong he did us all,
And that will quickly dry thy melting tears.

155 *Hyrcania*] The classical name of a wild region south of the Caspian Sea. See note on *Merch. of Ven.*, II, vii, 41.

CLIF. Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death. [*Stabbing him.*

Q. MAR. And here's to right our gentle-hearted king. [*Stabbing him.*

YORK. Open Thy gate of mercy, gracious God!
My soul flies through these wounds to seek out Thee.
[*Dies.*

Q. MAR. Off with his head, and set it on York gates;
So York may overlook the town of York.
[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

ACT SECOND — SCENE I

A PLAIN NEAR MORTIMER'S CROSS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

A march. Enter EDWARD, RICHARD, *and their power*

EDWARD

I WONDER HOW OUR princely father 'scaped,
Or whether he be 'scaped away or no
From Clifford's and Northumberland's pursuit:
Had he been ta'en, we should have heard the news;
Had he been slain, we should have heard the news;
Or had he 'scaped, methinks we should have heard
The happy tidings of his good escape.
How fares my brother? why is he so sad?

RICH. I cannot joy, until I be resolved

---

1 *I wonder . . . 'scaped*] An almost *verbatim* repetition of the first line of this play (I. i. 1.)

Where our right valiant father is become.
I saw him in the battle range about;
And watch'd him how he singled Clifford forth.
Methought he bore him in the thickest troop
As doth a lion in a herd of neat;
Or as a bear, encompass'd round with dogs,
Who having pinch'd a few and made them cry,
The rest stand all aloof, and bark at him.
So fared our father with his enemies;
So fled his enemies my warlike father:
Methinks, 't is prize enough to be his son.
See how the morning opes her golden gates,
And takes her farewell of the glorious sun!
How well resembles it the prime of youth,
Trimm'd like a younker prancing to his love!

EDW. Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

RICH. Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;
Not separated with the racking clouds,
But sever'd in a pale clear-shining sky.

---

10 *Where . . . become*] What has become of our father. Cf. IV, iv, 25, *infra*: "*where* is Warwick then *become*?"

14 *neat*] horned cattle.

25 *three suns*] Here, according to the stage direction of the Quartos, *Three sunns appear in the aire.* The chroniclers Hall and Holinshed mention this optical illusion, which Edward, the Duke of York's heir, experienced on the eve of the battle of Mortimer's Cross, February 2, 1461, when he defeated a Lancastrian army. That engagement is ignored in the play, which in this scene departs widely from the historic turn of events.

27 *racking clouds*] clouds moving rapidly in mass. Cf. *Sonnet* xxxiii, 5–6: "Anon permit the basest clouds to ride With ugly *rack* on his celestial face."

See, see! they join, embrace, and seem to kiss,
As if they vow'd some league inviolable:
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.
In this the heaven figures some event.
EDW. 'T is wondrous strange, the like yet never heard of.
I think it cites us, brother, to the field,
That we, the sons of brave Plantagenet,
Each one already blazing by our meeds,
Should notwithstanding join our lights together,
And over-shine the earth as this the world.
Whate'er it bodes, henceforward will I bear
Upon my target three fair-shining suns.
RICH. Nay, bear three daughters: by your leave I speak it,
You love the breeder better than the male.

Enter a Messenger

But what art thou, whose heavy looks foretell
Some dreadful story hanging on thy tongue?
MESS. Ah, one that was a woful looker-on
When as the noble Duke of York was slain,
Your princely father and my loving lord!

---

33 *wondrous strange*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 59, and *Hamlet*, I, v, 164.

36 *blazing by our meeds*] shining with a brilliance proportioned to our merits.

39–40 *will I bear . . . suns*] Cf. V, iii, 5, *infra*.

42 *breeder*] woman, female. This jest, appropriate enough to Edward's amorous character, sounds in the context a somewhat jarring note.

EDW. O, speak no more, for I have heard too much.
RICH. Say how he died, for I will hear it all.
MESS. Environed he was with many foes,
And stood against them, as the hope of Troy
Against the Greeks that would have enter'd Troy.
But Hercules himself must yield to odds;
And many strokes, though with a little axe,
Hew down and fell the hardest-timber'd oak.
By many hands your father was subdued;
But only slaughter'd by the ireful arm
Of unrelenting Clifford and the queen,
Who crown'd the gracious duke in high despite,
Laugh'd in his face; and when with grief he wept,
The ruthless queen gave him to dry his cheeks
A napkin steeped in the harmless blood
Of sweet young Rutland, by rough Clifford slain:
And after many scorns, many foul taunts,
They took his head, and on the gates of York
They set the same; and there it doth remain,
The saddest spectacle that e'er I view'd.
EDW. Sweet Duke of York, our prop to lean upon,
Now thou art gone, we have no staff, no stay.
O Clifford, boisterous Clifford! thou hast slain
The flower of Europe for his chivalry;
And treacherously hast thou vanquish'd him,
For hand to hand he would have vanquish'd thee.

---

51 *the hope of Troy*] Hector. Cf. IV, viii, 25: "my Hector, and my *Troy's true hope.*"

59 *in high despite*] in excess of spite, in height of scornful malice. Cf. II, vi, 80, *infra:* "in *all despite.*"

Now my soul's palace is become a prison:
Ah, would she break from hence, that this my body
Might in the ground be closed up in rest!
For never henceforth shall I joy again,
Never, O never, shall I see more joy!

RICH. I cannot weep; for all my body's moisture
Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart:
Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burthen;
For selfsame wind that I should speak withal
Is kindling coals that fires all my breast,
And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.
To weep is to make less the depth of grief:
Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me!
Richard, I bear thy name; I'll venge thy death,
Or die renowned by attempting it.

EDW. His name that valiant duke hath left with thee;
His dukedom and his chair with me is left.

RICH. Nay, if thou be that princely eagle's bird,
Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun:
For chair and dukedom, throne and kingdom say;
Either that is thine, or else thou wert not his.

---

80 *furnace-burning*] burning like a furnace. Cf. IV, viii, 43, *infra*, "*water-flowing* tears," and V, i, 57, "*Wind-changing* Warwick."

91–92 *princely eagle's bird . . . sun*] It was a familiar tradition of natural history that the genuineness of a young eagle's breed could be tested by its power of facing without flinching the glare of the sun. The conceit, which was very common in late Latin poetry, abounds in Elizabethan literature. Cf. *Elizabethan Sonnets* (ed. Sidney Lee), Introd., p. xci.

March. Enter WARWICK, MARQUESS OF MONTAGUE, *and their army*

WAR. How now, fair lords! What fare? what news abroad?

RICH. Great Lord of Warwick, if we should recount
Our baleful news, and at each word's deliverance
Stab poniards in our flesh till all were told,
The words would add more anguish than the wounds.
O valiant lord, the Duke of York is slain!

EDW. O Warwick, Warwick! that Plantagenet,
Which held thee dearly as his soul's redemption,
Is by the stern Lord Clifford done to death.

WAR. Ten days ago I drown'd these news in tears;
And now, to add more measure to your woes,
I come to tell you things sith then befall'n.
After the bloody fray at Wakefield fought,
Where your brave father breathed his latest gasp,
Tidings, as swiftly as the posts could run,
Were brought me of your loss and his depart.
I, then in London, keeper of the king,
Muster'd my soldiers, gather'd flocks of friends,
And very well appointed, as I thought,
March'd toward Saint Alban's to intercept the queen,
Bearing the king in my behalf along;

---

103 *done to death*] Cf. I, iv, 108, *supra: do him dead.*

105 *add more measure to*] increase the measure of.

110 *depart*] departure, parting from life, death. Cf. II, vi, 43, *infra*, "life and death's *departing*," and IV, i, 92, "At my *depart*."

113 *And . . . thought*] This line, which is omitted in the Folios, was restored from the Quartos by Steevens.

For by my scouts I was advertised,
That she was coming with a full intent
To dash our late decree in parliament,
Touching King Henry's oath and your succession.
Short tale to make, we at Saint Alban's met,
Our battles join'd, and both sides fiercely fought:
But whether 't was the coldness of the king,
Who look'd full gently on his warlike queen,
That robb'd my soldiers of their heated spleen;
Or whether 't was report of her success;
Or more than common fear of Clifford's rigour,
Who thunders to his captives blood and death,
I cannot judge: but, to conclude with truth,
Their weapons like to lightning came and went;
Our soldiers', like the night-owl's lazy flight,
Or like an idle thresher with a flail,
Fell gently down, as if they struck their friends.
I cheer'd them up with justice of our cause,
With promise of high pay and great rewards:
But all in vain; they had no heart to fight,
And we in them no hope to win the day;
So that we fled; the king unto the queen;
Lord George your brother, Norfolk and myself,
In haste, post-haste, are come to join with you;
For in the marches here we heard you were,
Making another head to fight again.

EDW. Where is the Duke of Norfolk, gentle Warwick?
And when came George from Burgundy to England?

121 *Our battles join'd*] Our armies joined battle. Cf. I, i, 15, *supra*.
141 *Making another head*] Gathering another force.

WAR. Some six miles off the duke is with the soldiers;
And for your brother, he was lately sent
From your kind aunt, Duchess of Burgundy,
With aid of soldiers to this needful war.
RICH. 'T was odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled:
Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,
But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.
WAR. Nor now my scandal, Richard, dost thou hear;
For thou shalt know this strong right hand of mine
Can pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head,
And wring the awful sceptre from his fist,
Were he as famous and as bold in war,
As he is famed for mildness, peace, and prayer.
RICH. I know it well, Lord Warwick; blame me not:
'T is love I bear thy glories makes me speak.
But in this troublous time what's to be done?
Shall we go throw away our coats of steel,
And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns,
Numbering our Ave-Maries with our beads?

146 *your kind aunt*] The Duchess of Burgundy of this date was merely third cousin of young Edward and his brothers. Their sister Margaret at a later date married Charles the Bold, heir of Duke Philip, whose duchess is mentioned in this line in the text. As a matter of history the Duke of York's sons George and Richard, mere boys, were sent to Flanders immediately after their father's death (Dec. 30, 1460), and did not return to England till after their eldest brother had won his crowning victory at Towton, March 29, 1461.

150 *his scandal of retire*] the discredit of his retreat.

162 *Numbering . . . beads*] Cf. the Queen's description of the king, *2 Hen VI*, I, iii, 59: "But all his mind is bent to holiness, *To number Ave-Maries on his beads.*"

Or shall we on the helmets of our foes
Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?
If for the last, say ay, and to it, lords.
WAR. Why, therefore Warwick came to seek you out;
And therefore comes my brother Montague.
Attend me, lords. The proud insulting queen,
With Clifford and the haught Northumberland,
And of their feather many moe proud birds,
Have wrought the easy-melting king like wax.
He swore consent to your succession,
His oath enrolled in the parliament;
And now to London all the crew are gone,
To frustrate both his oath and what beside
May make against the house of Lancaster.
Their power, I think, is thirty thousand strong:
Now, if the help of Norfolk and myself,
With all the friends that thou, brave Earl of March,
Amongst the loving Welshmen canst procure,
Will but amount to five and twenty thousand,
Why, Via! to London will we march amain,
And once again bestride our foaming steeds,
And once again cry "Charge upon our foes!"
But never once again turn back and fly.

170 *of their feather*] of the same plumage.

177 *thirty thousand*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *fifty thousand.* The chroniclers give the number of Lancastrian troops as 60,000 at the coming battle of Towton.

181 *five and twenty*] The Quartos give *eight and forty*, a number with which the chroniclers are in agreement. In the next scene (line 68) Warwick's army is said to consist of 30,000 men.

182 *Via! . . . amain*] Away! to London will we march at full speed.

RICH. Ay, now methinks I hear great Warwick speak:
Ne'er may he live to see a sunshine day,
That cries "Retire," if Warwick bid him stay.
EDW. Lord Warwick, on thy shoulder will I lean;
And when thou fail'st — as God forbid the hour! —
Must Edward fall, which peril heaven forfend!
WAR. No longer Earl of March, but Duke of York:
The next degree is England's royal throne;
For King of England shalt thou be proclaim'd
In every borough as we pass along;
And he that throws not up his cap for joy
Shall for the fault make forfeit of his head.
King Edward, valiant Richard, Montague,
Stay we no longer, dreaming of renown,
But sound the trumpets, and about our task.
RICH. Then, Clifford, were thy heart as hard as steel,
As thou hast shown it flinty by thy deeds,
I come to pierce it, or to give thee mine.
EDW. Then strike up drums: God and Saint George for us!

Enter a Messenger

WAR. How now! what news?
MESS. The Duke of Norfolk sends you word by me,
The queen is coming with a puissant host;
And craves your company for speedy counsel.
WAR. Why then it sorts, brave warriors, let's away.
[*Exeunt.*

209 *it sorts*] it fits, turns out right.

SCENE II — BEFORE YORK

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY, QUEEN MARGARET, *the* PRINCE OF WALES, CLIFFORD, *and* NORTHUMBERLAND, *with drum and trumpets*

Q. MAR. Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York.
Yonder's the head of that arch-enemy
That sought to be encompass'd with your crown:
Doth not the object cheer your heart, my lord?

K. HEN. Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wreck:
To see this sight, it irks my very soul.
Withhold revenge, dear God! 't is not my fault,
Nor wittingly have I infringed my vow.

CLIF. My gracious liege, this too much lenity
And harmful pity must be laid aside.
To whom do lions cast their gentle looks?
Not to the beast that would usurp their den.
Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick?
Not his that spoils her young before her face.
Who 'scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?
Not he that sets his foot upon her back.
The smallest worm will turn being trodden on,
And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.
Ambitious York did level at thy crown,
Thou smiling while he knit his angry brows:
He, but a duke, would have his son a king,
And raise his issue, like a loving sire;
Thou, being a king, blest with a goodly son,
Didst yield consent to disinherit him,

Which argued thee a most unloving father.
Unreasonable creatures feed their young;
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,
Who hath not seen them, even with those wings
Which sometime they have used with fearful flight,
Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,
Offering their own lives in their young's defence?
For shame, my liege, make them your precedent!
Were it not pity that this goodly boy
Should lose his birthright by his father's fault,
And long hereafter say unto his child,
"What my great-grandfather and grandsire got
My careless father fondly gave away"?
Ah, what a shame were this! Look on the boy;
And let his manly face, which promiseth
Successful fortune, steel thy melting heart
To hold thine own, and leave thine own with him.

K. Hen. Full well hath Clifford play'd the orator,
Inferring arguments of mighty force.
But, Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear
That things ill-got had ever bad success?
And happy always was it for that son

---

26 *Unreasonable*] Unreasoning, brutish.

44 *Inferring*] Adducing. This line is repeated almost verbatim, III, i, 49, *infra*.

46 *success*] issue, result.

47–48 *happy . . . hell*] the misfortunes which attend sons who inherit the estate of a miserly or covetous father form a favourite text for moralizing in Elizabethan writers. It is fully expounded by Robert Greene in *The Royal Exchange*, 1590 (ed. Grosart, Vol. VII, pp. 235, 236).

Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?
I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind;
And would my father had left me no more!
For all the rest is held at such a rate
As brings a thousand-fold more care to keep
Than in possession any jot of pleasure.
Ah, cousin York! would thy best friends did know
How it doth grieve me that thy head is here!

Q. Mar. My lord, cheer up your spirits: our foes are nigh,
And this soft courage makes your followers faint.
You promised knighthood to our forward son:
Unsheathe your sword, and dub him presently.
Edward, kneel down.

K. Hen. Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight;
And learn this lesson, draw thy sword in right.

Prince. My gracious father, by your kingly leave,
I'll draw it as apparent to the crown,
And in that quarrel use it to the death.

Clif. Why, that is spoken like a toward prince.

Enter a Messenger

Mess. Royal commanders, be in readiness:
For with a band of thirty thousand men
Comes Warwick, backing of the Duke of York;
And in the towns, as they do march along,

57 *soft courage*] soft-heartedness.
64 *apparent*] heir-apparent.
68 *thirty thousand*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *fiftie thousand.* See note on II, i, 181, *supra.*

Proclaims him king, and many fly to him:
Darraign your battle, for they are at hand.
CLIF. I would your highness would depart the field:
The queen hath best success when you are absent.
Q. MAR. Ay, good my lord, and leave us to our fortune.
K. HEN. Why, that's my fortune too; therefore I'll stay.
NORTH. Be it with resolution then to fight.
PRINCE. My royal father, cheer these noble lords,
And hearten those that fight in your defence:
Unsheathe your sword, good father; cry "Saint George!"

March. Enter EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, *and* Soldiers

EDW. Now, perjured Henry! wilt thou kneel for grace
And set thy diadem upon my head;
Or bide the mortal fortune of the field?
Q. MAR. Go, rate thy minions, proud insulting boy!
Becomes it thee to be thus bold in terms
Before thy sovereign and thy lawful king?
EDW. I am his king, and he should bow his knee;
I was adopted heir by his consent:
Since when, his oath is broke; for, as I hear,
You, that are king, though he do wear the crown,

72 *Darraign your battle*] Arrange, make ready your army. Cf. Hall's *Chronicle*, 47: "The Kyng of Englande . . . chose a place mete and conveniente for twoo armies to *darrayne battail*."

Have caused him, by new act of parliament,
To blot out me, and put his own son in.
CLIF. And reason too:
Who should succeed the father but the son?
RICH. Are you there, butcher? O, I cannot speak!
CLIF. Ay, crook-back, here I stand to answer thee,
Or any he the proudest of thy sort.
RICH. 'T was you that kill'd young Rutland, was it not?
CLIF. Ay, and old York, and yet not satisfied.
RICH. For God's sake, lords, give signal to the fight.
WAR. What say'st thou, Henry, wilt thou yield the crown?
Q. MAR. Why, how now, long-tongued Warwick! dare you speak?
When you and I met at Saint Alban's last,
Your legs did better service than your hands.
WAR. Then 't was my turn to fly, and now 't is thine.
CLIF. You said so much before, and yet you fled.
WAR. 'T was not your valour, Clifford, drove me thence.
NORTH. No, nor your manhood that durst make you stay.
RICH. Northumberland, I hold thee reverently.
Break off the parley; for scarce I can refrain
The execution of my big-swoln heart
Upon that Clifford, that cruel child-killer.

97 *any he . . . sort*] any man, be he the proudest of thy crew. Cf. I, i, 46, *supra* : *The proudest he.*

CLIF. I slew thy father, call'st thou him a child?
RICH. Ay, like a dastard and a treacherous coward,
As thou didst kill our tender brother Rutland;
But ere sunset I 'll make thee curse the deed.
K. HEN. Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak.
Q. MAR. Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.
K. HEN. I prithee, give no limits to my tongue:
I am a king, and privileged to speak.
CLIF. My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here
Cannot be cured by words; therefore be still.
RICH. Then, executioner, unsheathe thy sword:
By Him that made us all, I am resolved
That Clifford's manhood lies upon his tongue.
EDW. Say, Henry, shall I have my right, or no?
A thousand men have broke their fasts to-day,
That ne'er shall dine unless thou yield the crown.
WAR. If thou deny, their blood upon thy head;
For York in justice puts his armour on.
PRINCE. If that be right which Warwick says is right,
There is no wrong, but every thing is right.
RICH. Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands;
For, well I wot, thou hast thy mother's tongue.
Q. MAR. But thou art neither like thy sire nor dam;
But like a foul mis-shapen stigmatic,

136 *mis-shapen stigmatic*] branded with deformity. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, V, i, 215. Drayton, in his *England's Heroical Epistles* (Queen Margaret to the Duke of Suffolk, line 64), calls Richard "that foul ill-favoured crook-backed *stigmatic*."

Mark'd by the destinies to be avoided,
As venom toads, or lizards' dreadful stings.
RICH. Iron of Naples hid with English gilt,
Whose father bears the title of a king, —
As if a channel should be call'd the sea, —
Shamest thou not, knowing whence thou art extraught,
To let thy tongue detect thy base-born heart?
EDW. A wisp of straw were worth a thousand crowns,
To make this shameless callet know herself.
Helen of Greece was fairer far than thou,
Although thy husband may be Menelaus;
And ne'er was Agamemnon's brother wrong'd
By that false woman, as this king by thee.
His father revell'd in the heart of France,
And tamed the king, and made the dauphin stoop;
And had he match'd according to his state,
He might have kept that glory to this day;
But when he took a beggar to his bed,
And graced thy poor sire with his bridal-day,

138 *venom . . . stings*] The assignment of venom to toads, and stings to lizards, was a popular delusion. "Venom" here is used for the adjective "venomous."

141 *channel*] used in the sense of kennel or gutter; a streamlet of water.

142 *extraught*] a rare preterite of "extract."

144 *A wisp of straw*] Such an adornment was commonly set by way of scornful punishment on the head of a scold. Cf. Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse:* "A *wispe*, you kitchen stuffe wrangler." "Callet" (in the next line) usually means a woman of loose character, rather than a scold. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, I, iii, 81, "base-born callet."

147 *Menelaus*] *i. e.*, a cuckold. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, V, i, 60, where Thersites calls Menelaus "the primitive statue, and oblique memorial of cuckolds."

Even then that sunshine brew'd a shower for him,
That wash'd his father's fortunes forth of France,
And heap'd sedition on his crown at home.
For what hath broach'd this tumult but thy pride?
Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept;
And we, in pity of the gentle king,
Had slipp'd our claim until another age.

GEO. But when we saw our sunshine made thy spring,
And that thy summer bred us no increase,
We set the axe to thy usurping root;
And though the edge hath something hit ourselves,
Yet, know thou, since we have begun to strike,
We'll never leave till we have hewn thee down,
Or bathed thy growing with our heated bloods.

EDW. And, in this resolution, I defy thee;
Not willing any longer conference,
Since thou deniest the gentle king to speak.
Sound trumpets! let our bloody colours wave!
And either victory, or else a grave.

Q. MAR. Stay, Edward.

EDW. No, wrangling woman, we'll no longer stay:
These words will cost ten thousand lives this day.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III — A FIELD OF BATTLE BETWEEN TOWTON AND SAXTON, IN YORKSHIRE

Alarum. Excursions. Enter WARWICK

WAR. Forspent with toil, as runners with a race,
I lay me down a little while to breathe;

For strokes received, and many blows repaid,
Have robb'd my strong-knit sinews of their strength,
And spite of spite needs must I rest awhile.

Enter EDWARD, *running*

EDW. Smile, gentle heaven! or strike, ungentle death!
For this world frowns, and Edward's sun is clouded.
WAR. How now, my lord! what hap? what hope of good?

Enter GEORGE

GEO. Our hap is loss, our hope but sad despair;
Our ranks are broke, and ruin follows us:
What counsel give you? whither shall we fly?
EDW. Bootless is flight, they follow us with wings;
And weak we are and cannot shun pursuit.

Enter RICHARD

RICH. Ah, Warwick, why hast thou withdrawn thyself?
Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk,
Broach'd with the steely point of Clifford's lance;
And in the very pangs of death he cried,
Like to a dismal clangor heard from far,
"Warwick, revenge! brother, revenge my death!"
So, underneath the belly of their steeds,
That stain'd their fetlocks in his smoking blood,
The noble gentleman gave up the ghost.

5 *spite of spite*] in spite of everything. Cf. *K. John*, V, iv, 5: "In *spite of spite*."

WAR. Then let the earth be drunken with our blood:
I'll kill my horse, because I will not fly.
Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
Wailing our losses, whiles the foe doth rage;
And look upon, as if the tragedy
Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors?
Here on my knee I vow to God above,
I'll never pause again, never stand still,
Till either death hath closed these eyes of mine,
Or fortune given me measure of revenge.

EDW. O Warwick, I do bend my knee with thine;
And in this vow do chain my soul to thine!
And, ere my knee rise from the earth's cold face,
I throw my hands, mine eyes, my heart to Thee,
Thou setter up and plucker down of kings,
Beseeching Thee, if with Thy will it stands
That to my foes this body must be prey,
Yet that Thy brazen gates of heaven may ope,
And give sweet passage to my sinful soul!
Now, lords, take leave until we meet again,
Where'er it be, in heaven or in earth.

RICH. Brother, give me thy hand; and, gentle Warwick,
Let me embrace thee in my weary arms:
I, that did never weep, now melt with woe
That winter should cut off our spring-time so.

---

27 *look upon*] look on, stand by.

37 *Thou . . . kings*] This line is repeated almost verbatim, III, iii, 157, *infra*.

WAR. Away, away! Once more, sweet lords, farewell.

GEO. Yet let us all together to our troops,
And give them leave to fly that will not stay;
And call them pillars that will stand to us;
And, if we thrive, promise them such rewards
As victors wear at the Olympian games:
This may plant courage in their quailing breasts;
For yet is hope of life and victory.
Forslow no longer, make we hence amain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Excursions. Enter RICHARD *and* CLIFFORD

RICH. Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone:
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,
Wert thou environ'd with a brazen wall.

CLIF. Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone:
This is the hand that stabb'd thy father York;
And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death,
And cheers these hands that slew thy sire and brother
To execute the like upon thyself;
And so, have at thee!

[*They fight. Warwick comes; Clifford flies.*

56 *Forslow*] Loiter. The word, though not uncommon in contemporaries, is not used elsewhere by Shakespeare.
amain] at full speed; cf. II, i, 102, *supra.*

RICH. Nay, Warwick, single out some other chase;
For I myself will hunt this wolf to death. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Alarum. Enter KING HENRY *alone*

KING. This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind;
Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea
Forced to retire by fury of the wind:
Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
Now one the better, then another best;
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,
Yet neither conqueror nor conquered:
So is the equal poise of this fell war.
Here on this molehill will I sit me down.
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,
Have chid me from the battle; swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead! if God's good will were so;
For what is in this world but grief and woe?

12 *chase*] quarry; often used for the hunted animal.

3 *blowing of his nails*] *i. e.*, in order to warm himself. Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 900: "And Dick the shepherd *blows his nail.*"

O God! methinks it were a happy life,
To be no better than a homely swain;
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
How many make the hour full complete;
How many hours bring about the day;
How many days will finish up the year;
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times:
So many hours must I tend my flock;
So many hours must I take my rest;
So many hours must I contemplate;
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young;
So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean;
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn-bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O, yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,

24 *quaintly*] cleverly, ingeniously.
36 *the poor fools will ean*] the poor creatures will bring forth young.

His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.

Alarum. Enter a Son *that has killed his father, dragging in the body*

Son. Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.
This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight,
May be possessed with some store of crowns;
And I, that haply take them from him now,
May yet ere night yield both my life and them
To some man else, as this dead man doth me.
Who's this? O God! it is my father's face,
Whom in this conflict I unwares have kill'd.
O heavy times, begetting such events!
From London by the king was I press'd forth;
My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,
Came on the part of York, press'd by his master;
And I, who at his hands received my life,
Have by my hands of life bereaved him.
Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did!
And pardon, father, for I knew not thee!
My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks;
And no more words till they have flow'd their fill.

51 *delicates*] delicacies, luxuries.
53 *curious*] elaborate.
64 *press'd forth*] impressed, enlisted on compulsion.

K. Hen. O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!
Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,
Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity.
Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;
And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,
Be blind with tears, and break o'ercharged with grief.

Enter a Father *that has killed his son, bringing in the body*

Fath. Thou that so stoutly hast resisted me,
Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold;
For I have bought it with an hundred blows.
But let me see: is this our foeman's face?
Ah, no, no, no, it is mine only son!
Ah, boy, if any life be left in thee,
Throw up thine eye! see, see what showers arise,
Blown with the windy tempest of my heart,
Upon thy wounds, that kill mine eye and heart!
O, pity, God, this miserable age!
What statagems, how fell, how butcherly,
Erroneous, mutinous and unnatural,
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!
O boy, thy father gave thee life too soon,
And hath bereft thee of thy life too late!

75 *abide their enmity*] are punished for, pay for the lions' hostilities.

77–78 *let . . . grief*] the general meaning is: let our hearts and eyes suffer, like the two opposing forces in a civil war; the eyes be blinded by tears, and the hearts break from grief.

85–86 *what showers . . . heart*] Cf. I, iv, 145–146, *supra*, note.

92–93 *O boy . . . too late!*] The meaning of the first line seems to be that the father begot the son too early; had he been born later, he

K. Hen. Woe above woe! grief more than common grief!
O that my death would stay these ruthful deeds!
O, pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!
The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses:
The one his purple blood right well resembles;
The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth:
Wither one rose, and let the other flourish;
If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.
Son. How will my mother for a father's death
Take on with me and ne'er be satisfied!
Fath. How will my wife for slaughter of my son
Shed seas of tears and ne'er be satisfied!
K. Hen. How will the country for these woful chances
Misthink the king and not be satisfied!
Son. Was ever son so rued a father's death?
Fath. Was ever father so bemoan'd his son?
K. Hen. Was ever king so grieved for subjects' woe?
Much is your sorrow; mine ten times so much.
Son. I'll bear thee hence, where I may weep my fill.

[*Exit with the body.*

would have been too young to face death in fight. *Too late* in the second line is used in the sense of too lately, too recently, as in *Lucrece*, 1800–1801: "'O,'" quoth Lucretius, 'I did give that life Which she too early and *too late* hath spilt.'" The general intention of the two lines is the same as in the quotation from *Lucrece*, *viz.*: that the boy not only was born but also died prematurely.

104 *Take on*] be enraged, be angry.

108 *Misthink*] Think ill of. The Quartos read *Misdeem.*

FATH. These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre,
For from my heart thine image ne'er shall go;
My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell;
And so obsequious will thy father be,
Even for the loss of thee, having no more,
As Priam was for all his valiant sons.
I'll bear thee hence; and let them fight that will,
For I have murdered where I should not kill.

[*Exit with the body.*

K. HEN. Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,
Here sits a king more woful than you are.

Alarums. Excursions. Enter QUEEN MARGARET, *the* PRINCE, *and* EXETER

PRINCE. Fly, father, fly! for all your friends are fled,
And Warwick rages like a chafed bull:
Away! for death doth hold us in pursuit.

Q. MAR. Mount you, my lord; towards Berwick post amain:
Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds
Having the fearful flying hare in sight,
With fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath,
And bloody steel grasp'd in their ireful hands,
Are at our backs; and therefore hence amain.

EXE. Away! for vengeance comes along with them:

---

118 *obsequious*] attentive to funeral rites.

119 *Even*] Capell's emendation of the Folio misreading *Men*.

Nay, stay not to expostulate, make speed;
Or else come after: I'll away before.
K. Hen. Nay, take me with thee, good sweet Exeter:
Not that I fear to stay, but love to go
Whither the queen intends. Forward; away! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

A loud alarum. Enter Clifford, *wounded*

Clif. Here burns my candle out; ay, here it dies,
Which, whiles it lasted, gave King Henry light.
O Lancaster, I fear thy overthrow
More than my body's parting with my soul!
My love and fear glued many friends to thee;
And, now I fall, thy tough commixture melts.
Impairing Henry, strengthening misproud York,
The common people swarm like summer flies;
And whither fly the gnats but to the sun?
And who shines now but Henry's enemies? 10
O Phœbus, hadst thou never given consent

6 *thy tough commixture*] the stubborn glue compounded of love and fear (see line 5) which bound Clifford's friends to the king. For the Folio reading *thy*, the Quartos read more satisfactorily *that*.

8 *The . . . flies*] This line, which is omitted in the Folios, was restored by Theobald from the Quartos.

11 *hadst . . . consent*] Henry VI, who is likened to Phœbus, had intrusted the Duke of York, who is likened to Phaëthon, with supreme duties of government both in Ireland and France.

That Phaëthon should check thy fiery steeds,
Thy burning car never had scorch'd the earth!
And, Henry, hadst thou sway'd as kings should do,
Or as thy father and his father did,
Giving no ground unto the house of York,
They never then had sprung like summer flies;
I and ten thousand in this luckless realm
Had left no mourning widows for our death;
And thou this day hadst kept thy chair in peace.
For what doth cherish weeds but gentle air?
And what makes robbers bold but too much lenity?
Bootless are plaints, and cureless are my wounds;
No way to fly, nor strength to hold out flight:
The foe is merciless, and will not pity;
For at their hands I have deserved no pity.
The air hath got into my deadly wounds,
And much effuse of blood doth make me faint.
Come, York and Richard, Warwick and the rest;
I stabb'd your fathers' bosoms, split my breast.

[*He faints.*

Alarum and retreat. Enter EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, MONTAGUE, WARWICK, *and* Soldiers

EDW. Now breathe we, lords: good fortune bids us pause,
And smooth the frowns of war with peaceful looks.
Some troops pursue the bloody-minded queen,
That led calm Henry, though he were a king,
As doth a sail, fill'd with a fretting gust,

12 *check*] control, rein in.

Command an argosy to stem the waves.
But think you, lords, that Clifford fled with them?

WAR. No, 't is impossible he should escape;
For, though before his face I speak the words,
Your brother Richard mark'd him for the grave:
And wheresoe'er he is, he's surely dead.

[Clifford groans, and dies.

EDW. Whose soul is that which takes her heavy leave?

RICH. A deadly groan, like life and death's departing.

EDW. See who it is: and, now the battle's ended,
If friend or foe, let him be gently used.

RICH. Revoke that doom of mercy, for 't is Clifford;
Who not contented that he lopp'd the branch
In hewing Rutland when his leaves put forth,
But set his murdering knife unto the root
From whence that tender spray did sweetly spring,
I mean our princely father, Duke of York.

WAR. From off the gates of York fetch down the head,
Your father's head, which Clifford placed there;
Instead whereof let this supply the room:
Measure for measure must be answered.

EDW. Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,

---

43 *life and death's departing*] parting of life and death. Cf. II, i, 110, *supra:* "your loss and his *depart.*"

47 *contented*] here used as the preterite of an intransitive verb, "to content" *i. e.*, "to feel content."

55 *Measure for measure*] Tit for tat; a proverbial expression. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, V, i, 409.

56 *screech-owl*] a common barn owl, whose cry, resembling a shriek, was supposed to forebode disaster. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 365–367:

That nothing sung but death to us and ours:
Now death shall stop his dismal threatening sound,
And his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.
WAR. I think his understanding is bereft.
Speak, Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?
Dark cloudy death o'ershades his beams of life,
And he nor sees, nor hears us what we say.
RICH. O, would he did! and so perhaps he doth:
'T is but his policy to counterfeit,
Because he would avoid such bitter taunts
Which in the time of death he gave our father.
GEO. If so thou think'st, vex him with eager words.
RICH. Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.
EDW. Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.
WAR. Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.
GEO. While we devise fell tortures for thy faults.
RICH. Thou didst love York, and I am son to York.
EDW. Thou pitied'st Rutland; I will pity thee.
GEO. Where's Captain Margaret, to fence you now?
WAR. They mock thee, Clifford: swear as thou wast wont.
RICH. What, not an oath? nay, then the world goes hard,
When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.
I know by that he's dead; and, by my soul,
If this right hand would buy two hours' life,

"Whilst the *screech-owl* screeching loud, Puts the wretch that lies in woe *In remembrance of a shroud.*"

68 *eager*] sharp, biting,

That I in all despite might rail at him,
This hand should chop it off, and with the issuing blood
Stifle the villain, whose unstanched thirst
York and young Rutland could not satisfy.
WAR. Ay, but he 's dead: off with the traitor's head,
And rear it in the place your father's stands.
And now to London with triumphant march,
There to be crowned England's royal king:
From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France,
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen:
So shalt thou sinew both these lands together;
And, having France thy friend, thou shalt not dread
The scatter'd foe that hopes to rise again;
For though they cannot greatly sting to hurt,
Yet look to have them buzz to offend thine ears.
First will I see the coronation;
And then to Brittany I 'll cross the sea,
To effect this marriage, so it please my lord.
EDW. Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;
For in thy shoulder do I build my seat,
And never will I undertake the thing
Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting.
Richard, I will create thee Duke of Gloucester,
And George, of Clarence: Warwick, as ourself,
Shall do and undo as him pleaseth best.

81 *in all despite*] in all spite or malignity. Cf. II, i, 59, *supra.*
89 *cut*] cut through, sail.
91 *sinew*] bind as with sinews.
100 *in thy shoulder*] relying on thy support.

RICH. Let me be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester;
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.
WAR. Tut, that's a foolish observation:
Richard, be Duke of Gloucester. Now to London,
To see these honours in possession. [*Exeunt.*

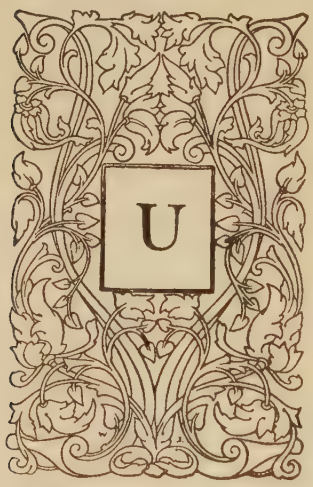
107 *Gloucester's dukedom . . . ominous*] Hall and Holinshed both point out that the three most recent Dukes of Gloucester had all met violent ends.

ACT THIRD — SCENE I

A FOREST IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

Enter two Keepers, *with cross-bows in their hands*

FIRST KEEPER



NDER THIS THICK-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves;
For through this laund anon the deer will come;
And in this covert will we make our stand,
Culling the principal of all the deer.

SEC. KEEP. I'll stay above the hill, so both may shoot.

FIRST KEEP. That cannot be; the noise of thy cross-bow
Will scare the herd, and so my shoot is lost.
Here stand we both, and aim we at the best:
And, for the time shall not seem tedious,

ACT III, SCENE I. (stage direction). *Enter two keepers*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Enter Sinklo, and Humfrey*, — clearly

I'll tell thee what befel me on a day
In this self-place where now we mean to stand.
SEC. KEEP. Here comes a man; let's stay till he be past.

Enter KING HENRY, *disguised, with a prayer-book*

K. HEN. From Scotland am I stol'n, even of pure love,
To greet mine own land with my wishful sight.
No, Harry, Harry, 't is no land of thine;
Thy place is fill'd, thy sceptre wrung from thee,
Thy balm wash'd off wherewith thou wast anointed:
No bending knee will call thee Cæsar now,
No humble suitors press to speak for right,
No, not a man comes for redress of thee;
For how can I help them, and not myself?
FIRST KEEP. Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee:
This is the quondam king; let's seize upon him.
K. HEN. Let me embrace thee, sour adversity,
For wise men say it is the wisest course.
SEC. KEEP. Why linger we? let us lay hands upon him.

---

the names of the actors who filled these parts. Cf. I, ii, 48, *supra*. Sinklo is similarly introduced into the Folio version of *T. of Shrew*, Induction, 189, and into the Quarto version of *2 Hen. IV*, V, iv, 1. Sinclo or Sinkler is mentioned as the name of an actor of Shakespeare's company in the Induction to Marston's *Malcontent*, 1604. Malone identified Humfrey with Humphrey Jeaffes or Jeffes, an actor of the day who is noticed in Henslowe's *Diary*.

1 *brake*] thicket.

2 *laund*] lawn, glade.

24 *thee, sour adversity*] Dyce's correction of the Folio reading *the sower Adversaries*.

FIRST KEEP. Forbear awhile; we'll hear a little more.
K. HEN. My queen and son are gone to France for aid;
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick
Is thither gone, to crave the French king's sister
To wife for Edward: if this news be true,
Poor queen and son, your labour is but lost;
For Warwick is a subtle orator,
And Lewis a prince soon won with moving words.
By this account then Margaret may win him;
For she's a woman to be pitied much:
Her sighs will make a battery in his breast;
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart;
The tiger will be mild whiles she doth mourn;
And Nero will be tainted with remorse,
To hear and see her plaints, her brinish tears.
Ay, but she's come to beg, Warwick, to give;
She, on his left side, craving aid for Henry,
He, on his right, asking a wife for Edward.
She weeps, and says her Henry is deposed;
He smiles, and says his Edward is install'd;
That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more;
Whiles Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,
Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,
And in conclusion wins the king from her,
With promise of his sister, and what else,
To strengthen and support King Edward's place.
O Margaret, thus 't will be; and thou, poor soul,
Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn!

40 *tainted with remorse*] touched with pity.
49 *Inferreth . . . strength*] Cf. I, ii, 44, *supra*, and note.

SEC. KEEP. Say, what art thou that talk'st of kings and queens?

K. HEN. More than I seem, and less than I was born to:
A man at least, for less I should not be;
And men may talk of kings, and why not I?

SEC. KEEP. Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.

K. HEN. Why, so I am, in mind; and that's enough.

SEC. KEEP. But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

K. HEN. My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,
Nor to be seen: my crown is call'd content:
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

SEC. KEEP. Well, if you be a king crown'd with content,
Your crown content and you must be contented
To go along with us; for, as we think,
You are the king King Edward hath deposed;
And we his subjects sworn in all allegiance
Will apprehend you as his enemy.

K. HEN. But did you never swear, and break an oath?

SEC. KEEP. No, never such an oath; nor will not now.

K. HEN. Where did you dwell when I was King of England?

SEC. KEEP. Here in this country, where we now remain.

63 *Indian stones*] precious stones from India.

K. Hen. I was anointed king at nine months old;
My father and my grandfather were kings,
And you were sworn true subjects unto me:
And tell me, then, have you not broke your oaths?
First Keep. No;
For we were subjects but while you were king.
K. Hen. Why, am I dead? do I not breathe a man?
Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear!
Look, as I blow this feather from my face,
And as the air blows it to me again,
Obeying with my wind when I do blow,
And yielding to another when it blows,
Commanded always by the greater gust;
Such is the lightness of you common men.
But do not break your oaths; for of that sin
My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.
Go where you will, the king shall be commanded;
And be you kings, command, and I'll obey.
First Keep. We are true subjects to the king,
King Edward.
K. Hen. So would you be again to Henry,
If he were seated as King Edward is.
First Keep. We charge you, in God's name, and
the king's,
To go with us unto the officers.
K. Hen. In God's name, lead; your king's name
be obey'd:
And what God will, that let your king perform;
And what he will, I humbly yield unto. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — LONDON

THE PALACE

Enter KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, *and* LADY GREY

K. EDW. Brother of Gloucester, at Saint Alban's field
This lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain,
His lands then seized on by the conqueror:
Her suit is now to repossess those lands;
Which we in justice cannot well deny,
Because in quarrel of the house of York
The worthy gentleman did lose his life.
GLOU. Your highness shall do well to grant her suit;
It were dishonour to deny it her.
K. EDW. It were no less; but yet I'll make a pause.
GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] Yea, is it so?
I see the lady hath a thing to grant,
Before the king will grant her humble suit.

2 *Sir Richard Grey*] Thus all the early editions. There is much confusion here. The first husband of Lady Grey (afterwards Edward IV's queen) was Sir *John* Grey, who had a brother Richard, but the latter had small connection with his fortunes. Lady Grey's first husband was not a supporter of King Edward, as the text states. He was killed fighting for Henry VI, at the second battle of St. Albans, February 2, 1461, when Queen Margaret was "the conqueror" (line 3), and his lands were untouched. Sir John's lands were seized by King Edward after the later battle of Towton. These circumstances are correctly stated in *Rich. III*, I, iii, 127–128. The account given by the chroniclers Hall and Holinshed of the interview of Edward IV with Sir John's widow, who begs of him her husband's lands, is very literally followed here by the dramatist.

CLAR. [*Aside to Glou.*] He knows the game: how true he keeps the wind!

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] Silence!

K. EDW. Widow, we will consider of your suit;
And come some other time to know our mind.

L. GREY. Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay:
May it please your highness to resolve me now;
And what your pleasure is, shall satisfy me.

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] Ay, widow? then I'll warrant you all your lands,
An if what pleases him shall pleasure you.
Fight closer, or, good faith, you'll catch a blow.

CLAR. [*Aside to Glou.*] I fear her not, unless she chance to fall.

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] God forbid that! for he'll take vantages.

K. EDW. How many children hast thou, widow? tell me.

CLAR. [*Aside to Glou.*] I think he means to beg a child of her.

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] Nay, whip me then: he'll rather give her two.

L. GREY. Three, my most gracious lord.

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] You shall have four, if you'll be ruled by him.

K. EDW. 'T were pity they should lose their father's lands.

---

14 *keeps the wind*] directs his aim; a phrase from hunting. The huntsman could only take sure aim at the deer by keeping to windward of it.

19 *resolve*] certify, assure, make definite answer.

L. GREY. Be pitiful, dread lord, and grant it then.
K. EDW. Lords, give us leave: I'll try this widow's wit.
GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] Ay, good leave have you; for you will have leave,
Till youth take leave and leave you to the crutch.
[*Glou. and Clar. retire.*
K. EDW. Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?
L. GREY. Ay, full as dearly as I love myself.
K. EDW. And would you not do much to do them good?
L. GREY. To do them good, I would sustain some harm.
K. EDW. Then get your husband's lands, to do them good.
L. GREY. Therefore I came unto your majesty.
K. EDW. I'll tell you how these lands are to be got.
L. GREY. So shall you bind me to your highness' service.
K. EDW. What service wilt thou do me, if I give them?
L. GREY. What you command, that rests in me to do.
K. EDW. But you will take exceptions to my boon.
L. GREY. No, gracious lord, except I cannot do it.
K. EDW. Ay, but thou canst do what I mean to ask.
L. GREY. Why, then I will do what your grace commands.

32 *it*] my suit.

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] He plies her hard; and much rain wears the marble.

CLAR. [*Aside to Glou.*] As red as fire! nay, then her wax must melt.

L. GREY. Why stops my lord? shall I not hear my task?

K. EDW. An easy task; 't is but to love a king.

L. GREY. That's soon perform'd, because I am a subject.

K. EDW. Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee.

L. GREY. I take my leave with many thousand thanks.

GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] The match is made; she seals it with a curt'sy.

K. EDW. But stay thee, 't is the fruits of love I mean.

L. GREY. The fruits of love I mean, my loving liege.

K. EDW. Ay, but, I fear me, in another sense.
What love, think'st thou, I sue so much to get?

L. GREY. My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers;
That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.

K. EDW. No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

L. GREY. Why, then you mean not as I thought you did.

K. EDW. But now you partly may perceive my mind.

L. GREY. My mind will never grant what I perceive
Your highness aims at, if I aim aright.

K. EDW. To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

L. GREY. To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.
K. EDW. Why, then thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.
L. GREY. Why, then mine honesty shall be my dower;
For by that loss I will not purchase them.
K. EDW. Therein thou wrong'st thy children mightily.
L. GREY. Herein your highness wrongs both them and me.
But, mighty lord, this merry inclination
Accords not with the sadness of my suit:
Please you dismiss me, either with "ay" or "no."
K. EDW. Ay, if thou wilt say "ay" to my request;
No, if thou dost say "no" to my demand.
L. GREY. Then, no, my lord. My suit is at an end.
GLOU. [*Aside to Clar.*] The widow likes him not, she knits her brows.
CLAR. [*Aside to Glou.*] He is the bluntest wooer in Christendom.
K. EDW. [*Aside*] Her looks do argue her replete with modesty;
Her words do show her wit incomparable;
All her perfections challenge sovereignty:
One way or other, she is for a king;
And she shall be my love, or else my queen. —
Say that King Edward take thee for his queen?
L. GREY. 'T is better said than done, my gracious lord:

77 *sadness*] seriousness, gravity.

I am a subject fit to jest withal,
But far unfit to be a sovereign.

K. Edw. Sweet widow, by my state I swear to thee,
I speak no more than what my soul intends;
And that is, to enjoy thee for my love.

L. Grey. And that is more than I will yield unto:
I know I am too mean to be your queen,
And yet too good to be your concubine.

K. Edw. You cavil, widow: I did mean, my queen.

L. Grey. 'T will grieve your grace my sons should call you father.

K. Edw. No more than when my daughters call thee mother.
Thou art a widow, and thou hast some children;
And, by God's mother, I, being but a bachelor,
Have other some: why, 't is a happy thing
To be the father unto many sons.
Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

Glou. [*Aside to Clar.*] The ghostly father now hath done his shrift.

Clar. [*Aside to Glou.*] When he was made a shriver, 't was for shift.

K. Edw. Brothers, you muse what chat we two have had.

Glou. The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad.

K. Edw. You 'ld think it strange if I should marry her.

Clar. To whom, my lord?

K. Edw. Why, Clarence, to myself.

Glou. That would be ten days' wonder at the least.

CLAR. That's a day longer than a wonder lasts.
GLOU. By so much is the wonder in extremes.
K. EDW. Well, jest on, brothers: I can tell you both,
Her suit is granted for her husband's lands.

Enter a Nobleman

NOB. My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken,
And brought your prisoner to your palace gate.
K. EDW. See that he be convey'd unto the Tower:
And go we, brothers, to the man that took him,
To question of his apprehension.
Widow, go you along. Lords, use her honourably.
[*Exeunt all but Gloucester.*
GLOU. Ay, Edward will use women honourably.
Would he were wasted, marrow, bones and all,
That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring,
To cross me from the golden time I look for!
And yet, between my soul's desire and me —
The lustful Edward's title buried —
Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward,
And all the unlook'd for issue of their bodies,
To take their rooms, ere I can place myself:
A cold premeditation for my purpose!
Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,

---

114 *That's a day longer*] A nine days' wonder was proverbial.

And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying, he'll lade it dry to have his way:
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;
And so I say, I'll cut the causes off,
Flattering me with impossibilities.
My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,
Unless my hand and strength could equal them.
Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;
What other pleasure can the world afford?
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,
And deck my body in gay ornaments,
And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.
O miserable thought! and more unlikely
Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!
Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,
Where sits deformity to mock my body;
To shape my legs of an unequal size;
To disproportion me in every part,
Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp
That carries no impression like the dam.
And am I then a man to be beloved?
O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,

I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And, whiles I live, to account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.
And yet I know not how to get the crown,
For many lives stand between me and home:
And I, — like one lost in a thorny wood,
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way and straying from the way;
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out, —
Torment myself to catch the English crown:
And from that torment I will free myself,
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.
Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry "Content" to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slily than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,

170 *Until my . . . head*] Thus the First Folio. Steevens proposes, not very felicitously, to make the words *mis-shaped trunk* and *head* change places. The confused inversion of the original text is not un-Shakespearean.

171 *impaled*] encircled. Cf. III, iii, 189, *infra*.

187 *basilisk*] the fabulous serpent who was credited with killing those who looked upon it.

Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down. [*Exit.*

SCENE III — FRANCE

THE KING'S PALACE

Flourish. Enter LEWIS *the French King, his sister* BONA, *his Admiral, called* BOURBON: PRINCE EDWARD, QUEEN MARGARET, *and the* EARL OF OXFORD. LEWIS *sits, and riseth up again*

K. LEW. Fair Queen of England, worthy Margaret,
Sit down with us: it ill befits thy state
And birth, that thou shouldst stand while Lewis doth sit.
Q. MAR. No, mighty King of France: now Margaret
Must strike her sail and learn a while to serve
Where kings command. I was, I must confess,
Great Albion's queen in former golden days:
But now mischance hath trod my title down,
And with dishonour laid me on the ground;
Where I must take like seat unto my fortune,
And to my humble seat conform myself.
K. LEW. Why, say, fair queen, whence springs this deep despair?

193 *the murderous Machiavel*] The Quartos read *th' aspiring Catiline.* "Machiavel" was the name commonly bestowed on any crafty politician. Cf. *1 Hen. VI*, V, iv, 74: "Alençon! that notorious *Machiavel!*" Such references are anachronistic, Machiavelli having been born in 1469 and dying in 1527.

Q. Mar. From such a cause as fills mine eyes with tears,
And stops my tongue, while heart is drown'd in cares.
K. Lew. Whate'er it be, be thou still like thyself,
And sit thee by our side: [*Seats her by him*] yield not thy neck
To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind
Still ride in triumph over all mischance.
Be plain, Queen Margaret, and tell thy grief;
It shall be eased, if France can yield relief.
Q. Mar. Those gracious words revive my drooping thoughts,
And give my tongue-tied sorrows leave to speak.
Now, therefore, be it known to noble Lewis,
That Henry, sole possessor of my love,
Is of a king become a banish'd man,
And forced to live in Scotland a forlorn;
While proud ambitious Edward Duke of York
Usurps the regal title, and the seat
Of England's true-anointed lawful king.
This is the cause that I, poor Margaret,
With this my son, Prince Edward, Henry's heir,
Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid;
And if thou fail us, all our hope is done:
Scotland hath will to help, but cannot help;
Our people and our peers are both misled,
Our treasure seized, our soldiers put to flight,
And, as thou seest, ourselves in heavy plight.

26 *a forlorn*] an outcast. The word is rarely used as a substantive.

K. Lew. Renowned queen, with patience calm the storm,
While we bethink a means to break it off.
Q. Mar. The more we stay, the stronger grows our foe.
K. Lew. The more I stay, the more I 'll succour thee.
Q. Mar. O, but impatience waiteth on true sorrow.
And see where comes the breeder of my sorrow!

Enter Warwick

K. Lew. What's he approacheth boldly to our presence?
Q. Mar. Our Earl of Warwick, Edward's greatest friend.
K. Lew. Welcome, brave Warwick! What brings thee to France? [*He descends. She ariseth.*
Q. Mar. Ay, now begins a second storm to rise;
For this is he that moves both wind and tide.
War. From worthy Edward, king of Albion,
My lord and sovereign, and thy vowed friend,
I come, in kindness and unfeigned love,
First, to do greetings to thy royal person;
And then to crave a league of amity;
And lastly, to confirm that amity
With nuptial knot, if thou vouchsafe to grant
That virtuous Lady Bona, thy fair sister,
To England's king in lawful marriage.
Q. Mar. [*Aside*] If that go forward, Henry's hope is done.
War. [*To Bona*] And, gracious madam, in our king's behalf,
I am commanded, with your leave and favour,

Humbly to kiss your hand, and with my tongue
To tell the passion of my sovereign's heart;
Where fame, late entering at his heedful ears,
Hath placed thy beauty's image and thy virtue.

Q. MAR. King Lewis and Lady Bona, hear me speak,
Before you answer Warwick. His demand
Springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love,
But from deceit bred by necessity;
For how can tyrants safely govern home,
Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?
To prove him tyrant this reason may suffice,
That Henry liveth still; but were he dead,
Yet here Prince Edward stands, King Henry's son.
Look, therefore, Lewis, that by this league and marriage
Thou draw not on thy danger and dishonour;
For though usurpers sway the rule a while,
Yet heavens are just, and time suppresseth wrongs.

WAR. Injurious Margaret!

PRINCE. And why not queen?

WAR. Because thy father Henry did usurp;
And thou no more art prince than she is queen.

OXF. Then Warwick disannuls great John of Gaunt,
Which did subdue the greatest part of Spain;
And, after John of Gaunt, Henry the Fourth,
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest;
And, after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth,
Who by his prowess conquered all France:
From these our Henry lineally descends.

WAR. Oxford, how haps it, in this smooth discourse,
You told not how Henry the Sixth hath lost

All that which Henry the Fifth had gotten?
Methinks these peers of France should smile at that.
But for the rest, you tell a pedigree
Of threescore and two years; a silly time
To make prescription for a kingdom's worth.

OXF. Why, Warwick, canst thou speak against thy liege,
Whom thou obeyed'st thirty and six years,
And not bewray thy treason with a blush?

WAR. Can Oxford, that did ever fence the right,
Now buckler falsehood with a pedigree?
For shame! leave Henry, and call Edward king.

OXF. Call him my king by whose injurious doom
My elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere,
Was done to death? and more than so, my father,
Even in the downfall of his mellow'd years,
When nature brought him to the door of death?
No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm,
This arm upholds the house of Lancaster.

WAR. And I the house of York.

K. LEW. Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and Oxford,
Vouchsafe, at our request, to stand aside,
While I use further conference with Warwick.

[*They stand aloof.*

Q. MAR. Heavens grant that Warwick's words bewitch him not!

K. LEW. Now, Warwick, tell me, even upon thy conscience,

99 *buckler*] used as a verb; shield, defend.

Is Edward your true king? for I were loath
To link with him that were not lawful chosen.
WAR. Thereon I pawn my credit and mine honour.
K. LEW. But is he gracious in the people's eye?
WAR. The more that Henry was unfortunate.
K. LEW. Then further, all dissembling set aside,
Tell me for truth the measure of his love
Unto our sister Bona.
WAR. Such it seems
As may beseem a monarch like himself.
Myself have often heard him say and swear
That this his love was an eternal plant,
Whereof the root was fix'd in virtue's ground,
The leaves and fruit maintain'd with beauty's sun,
Exempt from envy, but not from disdain,
Unless the Lady Bona quit his pain.
K. LEW. Now, sister, let us hear your firm resolve.
BONA. Your grant, or your denial, shall be mine:
[*To War.*] Yet I confess that often ere this day,
When I have heard your king's desert recounted,
Mine ear hath tempted judgement to desire.
K. LEW. Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's;
And now forthwith shall articles be drawn
Touching the jointure that your king must make,
Which with her dowry shall be counterpoised.
Draw near, Queen Margaret, and be a witness
That Bona shall be wife to the English king.

128 *quit his pain*] requite, cure, his suffering.

PRINCE. To Edward, but not to the English king.
Q. MAR. Deceitful Warwick! it was thy device
By this alliance to make void my suit:
Before thy coming Lewis was Henry's friend.
K. LEW. And still is friend to him and Margaret:
But if your title to the crown be weak,
As may appear by Edward's good success,
Then 't is but reason that I be released
From giving aid which late I promised.
Yet shall you have all kindness at my hand
That your estate requires and mine can yield.
WAR. Henry now lives in Scotland at his ease,
Where having nothing, nothing can he lose.
And as for you yourself, our quondam queen,
You have a father able to maintain you;
And better 't were you troubled him than France.
Q. MAR. Peace, impudent and shameless Warwick, peace,
Proud setter up and puller down of kings!
I will not hence, till, with my talk and tears,
Both full of truth, I make King Lewis behold
Thy sly conveyance, and thy lord's false love;
For both of you are birds of selfsame feather.
[*Post blows a horn within.*
K. LEW. Warwick, this is some post to us or thee.

154 *You . . . you*] an ironical reference to the poverty of Margaret's father.

157 *Proud . . . kings*] This line is repeated almost verbatim from II, iii, 37, *supra*.

160 *sly conveyance*] sly trickery, juggling.

Enter a Post

POST. [*To War.*] My lord ambassador, these letters are for you,
Sent from your brother, Marquess Montague:
[*To Lewis*] These from our king unto your majesty:
[*To Margaret*] And, madam, these for you; from whom I know not. [*They all read their letters.*

OXF. I like it well that our fair queen and mistress
Smiles at her news, while Warwick frowns at his.

PRINCE. Nay, mark how Lewis stamps, as he were nettled:
I hope all's for the best.

K. LEW. Warwick, what are thy news? and yours, fair queen?

Q. MAR. Mine, such as fill my heart with unhoped joys.

WAR. Mine, full of sorrow and heart's discontent.

K. LEW. What! has your king married the Lady Grey?
And now, to soothe your forgery and his,
Sends me a paper to persuade me patience?
Is this the alliance that he seeks with France?
Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?

Q. MAR. I told your majesty as much before:
This proveth Edward's love and Warwick's honesty.

WAR. King Lewis, I here protest, in sight of heaven,
And by the hope I have of heavenly bliss,
That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's,

---

175 *soothe your forgery*] gloss over your deceit.

No more my king, for he dishonours me,
But most himself, if he could see his shame.
Did I forget that by the house of York
My father came untimely to his death?
Did I let pass the abuse done to my niece?
Did I impale him with the regal crown?
Did I put Henry from his native right?
And am I guerdon'd at the last with shame?
Shame on himself! for my desert is honour:
And to repair my honour lost for him,
I here renounce him and return to Henry.
My noble queen, let former grudges pass,
And henceforth I am thy true servitor:
I will revenge his wrong to Lady Bona,
And replant Henry in his former state.

Q. Mar. Warwick, these words have turn'd my hate to love;
And I forgive and quite forget old faults,
And joy that thou becomest King Henry's friend.

War. So much his friend, ay, his unfeigned friend,
That, if King Lewis vouchsafe to furnish us
With some few bands of chosen soldiers,
I'll undertake to land them on our coast,

186–187 *Did I forget . . . death?*] An historical error. Warwick's father, Richard, Earl of Salisbury, was taken prisoner by the Lancastrians at the battle of Wakefield, and was beheaded by Queen Margaret's order at Pontefract.

188 *Did . . . niece?*] Hall and Holinshed both report the attempt of King Edward to violate a female relative of Warwick ("his daughter or his niece") in the Earl's house.

189 *impale*] encircle. Cf. III, ii, 171, *supra*.

And force the tyrant from his seat by war.
'T is not his new-made bride shall succour him:
And as for Clarence, as my letters tell me,
He 's very likely now to fall from him,
For matching more for wanton lust than honour,
Or than for strength and safety of our country.
BONA. Dear brother, how shall Bona be revenged
But by thy help to this distressed queen?
Q. MAR. Renowned prince, how shall poor Henry live,
Unless thou rescue him from foul despair?
BONA. My quarrel and this English queen's are one.
WAR. And mine, fair Lady Bona, joins with yours.
K. LEW. And mine with hers, and thine, and Margaret's.
Therefore at last I firmly am resolved
You shall have aid.
Q. MAR. Let me give humble thanks for all at once.
K. LEW. Then, England's messenger, return in post,
And tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers,
To revel it with him and his new bride:
Thou seest what 's past, go fear thy king withal.
BONA. Tell him, in hope he 'll prove a widower shortly,
I 'll wear the willow garland for his sake.

222 *post*] post-haste. Cf. I, ii, 48, *supra*.
226 *fear*] frighten, terrify, make afraid.
228 *the willow garland*] the badge of jilted lovers.

Q. Mar. Tell him, my mourning weeds are laid aside,
And I am ready to put armour on.
War. Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere 't be long.
There's thy reward: be gone. [*Exit post.*
K. Lew. But, Warwick,
Thou and Oxford, with five thousand men,
Shall cross the seas, and bid false Edward battle;
And, as occasion serves, this noble queen
And prince shall follow with a fresh supply.
Yet, ere thou go, but answer me one doubt,
What pledge have we of thy firm loyalty?
War. This shall assure my constant loyalty,
That if our queen and this young prince agree,
I'll join mine eldest daughter and my joy
To him forthwith in holy wedlock bands.
Q. Mar. Yes, I agree, and thank you for your motion.
Son Edward, she is fair and virtuous,
Therefore delay not, give thy hand to Warwick;
And, with thy hand, thy faith irrevocable,
That only Warwick's daughter shall be thine.
Prince. Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it;
And here, to pledge my vow, I give my hand.
[*He gives his hand to Warwick.*
K. Lew. Why stay we now? These soldiers shall be levied,

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242 *mine eldest*] As a matter of history Warwick's younger daughter, Anne, became the wife of Prince Edward. His elder daughter married the Duke of Clarence. Cf. IV, i, 118, *infra*.

And thou, Lord Bourbon, our high admiral,
Shalt waft them over with our royal fleet.
I long till Edward fall by war's mischance,
For mocking marriage with a dame of France.
[*Exeunt all but Warwick.*

WAR. I came from Edward as ambassador,
But I return his sworn and mortal foe:
Matter of marriage was the charge he gave me,
But dreadful war shall answer his demand.
Had he none else to make a stale but me?
Then none but I shall turn his jest to sorrow.
I was the chief that raised him to the crown,
And I'll be chief to bring him down again:
Not that I pity Henry's misery,
But seek revenge on Edward's mockery. [*Exit.*

260 *stale*] laughing-stock.

ACT FOURTH — SCENE I — LONDON

THE PALACE

Enter GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, SOMERSET, *and* MONTAGUE

GLOUCESTER

NOW TELL ME, BROTHER Clarence, what think you
Of this new marriage with the Lady Grey?
Hath not our brother made a worthy choice?

CLAR. Alas, you know, 't is far from hence to France;
How could he stay till Warwick made return?

SOM. My lords, forbear this talk; here comes the king.

GLOU. And his well-chosen bride.

CLAR. I mind to tell him plainly what I think.

6 SOM. *My lords*] The Duke of Somerset of this period was a consistent Lancastrian, and was never at King Edward's court. There is some confusion with his brother and predecessor in the title, who transferred his allegiance to King Edward IV for a brief while, although he died

Flourish. *Enter* KING EDWARD, *attended;* LADY GREY, *as Queen;* PEMBROKE, STAFFORD, HASTINGS, *and others*

K. EDW. Now, brother of Clarence, how like you our choice,
That you stand pensive, as half malcontent?
CLAR. As well as Lewis of France, or the Earl of Warwick,
Which are so weak of courage and in judgement
That they'll take no offence at our abuse.
K. EDW. Suppose they take offence without a cause,
They are but Lewis and Warwick: I am Edward,
Your king and Warwick's, and must have my will.
GLOU. And shall have your will, because our king:
Yet hasty marriage seldom proveth well.
K. EDW. Yea, brother Richard, are you offended too?
GLOU. Not I:
No, God forbid that I should wish them sever'd
Whom God hath join'd together; ay, and 't were pity
To sunder them that yoke so well together.
K. EDW. Setting your scorns and your mislike aside,
Tell me some reason why the Lady Grey
Should not become my wife and England's queen.
And you too, Somerset and Montague,
Speak freely what you think.
CLAR. Then this is mine opinion: that King Lewis
Becomes your enemy, for mocking him
About the marriage of the Lady Bona.

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at Hexham fully five years before these events, fighting for Henry VI. Cf. IV, ii, 3–7; V, i, 73–75; V, v, 3; V, vii, 5, *infra.*

GLOU. And Warwick, doing what you gave in charge,
Is now dishonoured by this new marriage.
K. EDW. What if both Lewis and Warwick be appeased
By such invention as I can devise?
MONT. Yet, to have join'd with France in such alliance
Would more have strengthen'd this our commonwealth
'Gainst foreign storms than any home-bred marriage.
HAST. Why, knows not Montague that of itself
England is safe, if true within itself?
MONT. But the safer when 't is back'd with France.
HAST. 'T is better using France than trusting France:
Let us be back'd with God and with the seas,
Which He hath given for fence impregnable,
And with their helps only defend ourselves;
In them and in ourselves our safety lies.
CLAR. For this one speech Lord Hastings well deserves
To have the heir of the Lord Hungerford.
K. EDW. Ay, what of that? it was my will and grant;
And for this once my will shall stand for law.
GLOU. And yet methinks your grace hath not done well,
To give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales
Unto the brother of your loving bride;

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40 *England . . . itself*] Cf. the last speech of *K. John*, V, vii, 117–118: "Nought shall make us rue, If England to itself do rest but true."

She better would have fitted me or Clarence:
But in your bride you bury brotherhood.
CLAR. Or else you would not have bestow'd the heir
Of the Lord Bonville on your new wife's son,
And leave your brothers to go speed elsewhere.
K. EDW. Alas, poor Clarence! is it for a wife
That thou art malcontent? I will provide thee.
CLAR. In choosing for yourself, you show'd your judgement,
Which being shallow, you shall give me leave
To play the broker in mine own behalf;
And to that end I shortly mind to leave you.
K. EDW. Leave me, or tarry, Edward will be king,
And not be tied unto his brother's will.
Q. ELIZ. My lords, before it pleased his majesty
To raise my state to title of a queen,
Do me but right, and you must all confess
That I was not ignoble of descent;
And meaner than myself have had like fortune.
But as this title honours me and mine,
So your dislike, to whom I would be pleasing,
Doth cloud my joys with danger and with sorrow.
K. EDW. My love, forbear to fawn upon their frowns:
What danger or what sorrow can befall thee,
So long as Edward is thy constant friend,

56 *bestow'd the heir*] Kings exerted the right of acting as guardian of heirs and heiresses of large estates during their minority, and of bestowing their hands in marriage. Edward IV caused the *heiress* of Lord Bonville to be married to his queen's son by her former marriage.

And their true sovereign, whom they must obey?
Nay, whom they shall obey, and love thee too,
Unless they seek for hatred at my hands;
Which if they do, yet will I keep thee safe,
And they shall feel the vengeance of my wrath.

GLOU. I hear, yet say not much, but think the more. [*Aside.*

Enter a Post

K. EDW. Now, messenger, what letters or what news
From France?

POST. My sovereign liege, no letters; and few words,
But such as I, without your special pardon,
Dare not relate.

K. EDW. Go to, we pardon thee: therefore, in brief,
Tell me their words as near as thou canst guess them.
What answer makes King Lewis unto our letters?

POST. At my depart, these were his very words:
"Go tell false Edward, thy supposed king,
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers
To revel it with him and his new bride."

K. EDW. Is Lewis so brave? belike he thinks me Henry.
But what said Lady Bona to my marriage?

POST. These were her words, utter'd with mild disdain:
"Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake."

92 *depart*] departure. Cf. II, i, 110, *supra.*

K. Edw. I blame not her, she could say little less;
She had the wrong. But what said Henry's queen?
For I have heard that she was there in place.
Post. "Tell him," quoth she, "my mourning weeds are done,
And I am ready to put armour on."
K. Edw. Belike she minds to play the Amazon.
But what said Warwick to these injuries?
Post. He, more incensed against your majesty
Than all the rest, discharged me with these words:
"Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere 't be long."
K. Edw. Ha! durst the traitor breathe out so proud words?
Well, I will arm me, being thus forewarn'd:
They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.
But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?
Post. Ay, gracious sovereign; they are so link'd in friendship,
That young Prince Edward marries Warwick's daughter.
Clar. Belike the elder; Clarence will have the younger.
Now, brother king, farewell, and sit you fast,
For I will hence to Warwick's other daughter;
That, though I want a kingdom, yet in marriage

103 *in place*] present. Cf. IV, vi, 31, *infra*.
118 *Clarence . . . younger*] Historically this is an error, Clarence marrying the elder, and Prince Edward the younger, daughter of Warwick. Cf. III, iii, 342, *supra*.

I may not prove inferior to yourself.
You that love me and Warwick, follow me.
[*Exit Clarence, and Somerset follows.*

GLOU. [*Aside*] Not I:
My thoughts aim at a further matter; I
Stay not for the love of Edward, but the crown.

K. EDW. Clarence and Somerset both gone to Warwick!
Yet am I arm'd against the worst can happen;
And haste is needful in this desperate case.
Pembroke and Stafford, you in our behalf
Go levy men, and make prepare for war;
They are already, or quickly will be landed:
Myself in person will straight follow you.
[*Exeunt Pembroke and Stafford.*
But, ere I go, Hastings and Montague,
Resolve my doubt. You twain, of all the rest,
Are near to Warwick by blood and by alliance:
Tell me if you love Warwick more than me;
If it be so, then both depart to him;
I rather wish you foes than hollow friends:
But if you mind to hold your true obedience,
Give me assurance with some friendly vow,
That I may never have you in suspect.

MONT. So God help Montague as he proves true!

HAST. And Hastings as he favours Edward's cause!

K. EDW. Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?

GLOU. Ay, in despite of all that shall withstand you.

K. EDW. Why, so! then am I sure of victory.

Now therefore let us hence; and lose no hour,
Till we meet Warwick with his foreign power. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — A PLAIN IN WARWICKSHIRE

Enter WARWICK *and* OXFORD, *with French* soldiers

WAR. Trust me, my lord, all hitherto goes well;
The common people by numbers swarm to us.

Enter CLARENCE *and* SOMERSET

But see where Somerset and Clarence comes!
Speak suddenly, my lords, are we all friends?

CLAR. Fear not that, my lord.

WAR. Then, gentle Clarence, welcome unto Warwick;
And welcome, Somerset: I hold it cowardice
To rest mistrustful where a noble heart
Hath pawn'd an open hand in sign of love;
Else might I think that Clarence, Edward's brother,
Were but a feigned friend to our proceedings:
But welcome, sweet Clarence; my daughter shall be thine.
And now what rests but, in night's coverture,
Thy brother being carelessly encamp'd,
His soldiers lurking in the towns about,
And but attended by a simple guard,
We may surprise and take him at our pleasure?

7 *welcome, Somerset*] the Duke of Somerset of this period, a consistent Lancastrian, had never joined the Yorkists. Cf. IV, i, 6, *supra*, and note.

13 *in night's coverture*] in the shadow of night.

15 *towns*] villages; a frequent usage.

Our scouts have found the adventure very easy:
That as Ulysses and stout Diomede
With sleight and manhood stole to Rhesus' tents,
And brought from thence the Thracian fatal steeds,
So we, well cover'd with the night's black mantle,
At unawares may beat down Edward's guard,
And seize himself; I say not, slaughter him,
For I intend but only to surprise him.
You that will follow me to this attempt,
Applaud the name of Henry with your leader.
[*They all cry,* "Henry!"
Why, then, let's on our way in silent sort:
For Warwick and his friends, God and Saint George!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III — EDWARD'S CAMP, NEAR WARWICK

Enter three Watchmen, *to guard the* KING'S *tent*

FIRST WATCH. Come on, my masters, each man take his stand:
The king by this is set him down to sleep.
SECOND WATCH. What, will he not to bed?
FIRST WATCH. Why, no; for he hath made a solemn vow,

19–21 *as Ulysses . . . steeds*] According to Homer's *Iliad*, Book X, the Thracian prince Rhesus was bringing help to Priam and was thereby apparently fulfilling the prophecy that if Thracian horses once drank of the river Xanthus or grazed on Trojan pastures, Troy would never fall, when the Greeks, Ulysses and Diomede, intercepted the approach of the Thracian prince and killed him and his horses. Ovid refers to the story in *Metamorphoses*, XIII, 249.

Never to lie and take his natural rest,
Till Warwick or himself be quite suppress'd.
SECOND WATCH. To-morrow then belike shall be the day,
If Warwick be so near as men report.
THIRD WATCH. But say, I pray, what nobleman is that,
That with the king here resteth in his tent?
FIRST WATCH. 'T is the Lord Hastings, the king's chiefest friend.
THIRD WATCH. O, is it so? But why commands the king
That his chief followers lodge in towns about him,
While he himself keeps in the cold field?
SECOND WATCH. 'T is the more honour, because more dangerous.
THIRD WATCH. Ay, but give me worship and quietness;
I like it better than a dangerous honour.
If Warwick knew in what estate he stands,
'T is to be doubted he would waken him.
FIRST WATCH. Unless our halberts did shut up his passage.
SECOND WATCH. Ay, wherefore else guard we his royal tent,
But to defend his person from night-foes?

Enter WARWICK, CLARENCE, OXFORD, SOMERSET, *and French soldiers, silent all*

WAR. This is his tent; and see where stand his guard.

Courage, my masters! honour now or never!
But follow me, and Edward shall be ours.

FIRST WATCH. Who goes there?

SECOND WATCH. Stay, or thou diest!

[Warwick and the rest cry all, "Warwick! Warwick!" *and set upon the Guard, who fly, crying,* "Arm! arm!" *Warwick and the rest following them.*

The drum playing and trumpet sounding, re-enter WARWICK, SOMERSET, *and the rest, bringing the* KING *out in his gown, sitting in a chair.* RICHARD *and* HASTINGS *fly over the stage*

SOM. What are they that fly there?

WAR. Richard and Hastings: let them go; here is
The duke.

K. EDW. The duke! Why, Warwick, when we
parted,
Thou call'dst me king.

WAR. Ay, but the case is alter'd:
When you disgraced me in my embassade,
Then I degraded you from being king,
And come now to create you Duke of York.
Alas! how should you govern any kingdom,
That know not how to use ambassadors,
Nor how to be contented with one wife,
Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,
Nor how to study for the people's welfare,
Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies?

30 *parted*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos add *last*, which Capell restored.

K. Edw. Yea, brother of Clarence, art thou here too?
Nay, then I see that Edward needs must down.
Yet, Warwick, in despite of all mischance,
Of thee thyself and all thy complices,
Edward will always bear himself as king:
Though fortune's malice overthrow my state,
My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.
War. Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king: [*Takes off his crown.*
But Henry now shall wear the English crown,
And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow.
My Lord of Somerset, at my request,
See that forthwith Duke Edward be convey'd
Unto my brother, Archbishop of York.
When I have fought with Pembroke and his fellows,
I'll follow you, and tell what answer
Lewis and the Lady Bona send to him.
Now, for a while farewell, good Duke of York.
[*They lead him out forcibly.*
K. Edw. What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide. [*Exit, guarded.*
Oxf. What now remains, my lords, for us to do,
But march to London with our soldiers?
War. Ay, that's the first thing that we have to do;
To free king Henry from imprisonment,
And see him seated in the regal throne. [*Exeunt.*

48 *for his mind*] in mind, in imagination (not in reality).

SCENE IV — LONDON

THE PALACE

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH *and* RIVERS

RIV. Madam, what makes you in this sudden change?
Q. ELIZ. Why, brother Rivers, are you yet to learn
What late misfortune is befall'n King Edward?
RIV. What! loss of some pitch'd battle against Warwick?
Q. ELIZ. No, but the loss of his own royal person.
RIV. Then is my sovereign slain?
Q. ELIZ. Ay, almost slain, for he is taken prisoner,
Either betray'd by falsehood of his guard,
Or by his foe surprised at unawares:
And, as I further have to understand,
Is new committed to the Bishop of York,
Fell Warwick's brother and by that our foe.
RIV. These news I must confess are full of grief;
Yet, gracious madam, bear it as you may:
Warwick may lose, that now hath won the day.
Q. ELIZ. Till then fair hope must hinder life's decay.
And I the rather wean me from despair
For love of Edward's offspring in my womb:
This is it that makes me bridle passion,
And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross;
Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear
And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,

22 *blood-sucking sighs*] See note on *2 Hen. VI*, III, ii, 63: "*blood-drinking* sighs."

Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown
King Edward's fruit, true heir to the English crown.
RIV. But, madam, where is Warwick then become?
Q. ELIZ. I am inform'd that he comes towards London,
To set the crown once more on Henry's head:
Guess thou the rest; King Edward's friends must down,
But, to prevent the tyrant's violence, —
For trust not him that hath once broken faith, —
I'll hence forthwith unto the sanctuary,
To save at least the heir of Edward's right:
There shall I rest secure from force and fraud.
Come, therefore, let us fly while we may fly:
If Warwick take us we are sure to die. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V — A PARK NEAR MIDDLEHAM CASTLE IN YORKSHIRE

Enter GLOUCESTER, LORD HASTINGS, SIR WILLIAM STANLEY, *and others*

GLOU. Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley,
Leave off to wonder why I drew you hither,
Into this chiefest thicket of the park.
Thus stands the case: you know our king, my brother,

25 *where . . . become?*] what has become of Warwick? Cf. II, i, 10, and note.

31 *the sanctuary*] the precincts of Westminster Abbey, where accused persons enjoyed freedom from arrest.

Is prisoner to the bishop here, at whose hands
He hath good usage and great liberty,
And, often but attended with weak guard,
Comes hunting this way to disport himself.
I have advertised him by secret means,
That if about this hour he make this way
Under the colour of his usual game,
He shall here find his friends with horse and men
To set him free from his captivity.

Enter KING EDWARD *and a* Huntsman *with him*

HUNT. This way, my lord; for this way lies the game.

K. EDW. Nay, this way, man: see where the huntsmen stand.
Now, brother of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Stand you thus close, to steal the bishop's deer?

GLOU. Brother, the time and case requireth haste:
Your horse stands ready at the park-corner.

K. EDW. But whither shall we then?

HAST. To Lynn, my lord,
And ship from thence to Flanders.

GLOU. Well guess'd, believe me; for that was my meaning.

K. EDW. Stanley, I will requite thy forwardness.

GLOU. But wherefore stay we? 't is no time to talk.

K. EDW. Huntsmen, what say'st thou? wilt thou go along?

11 *colour*] pretext, pretence.

HUNT. Better do so than tarry and be hang'd.
GLOU. Come then, away; let's ha' no more ado.
K. EDW. Bishop, farewell: shield thee from Warwick's frown;
And pray that I may repossess the crown. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI — LONDON

THE TOWER

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY, CLARENCE, WARWICK, SOMERSET, *young* RICHMOND, OXFORD, MONTAGUE, *and* Lieutenant of the Tower

K. HEN. Master lieutenant, now that God and friends
Have shaken Edward from the regal seat,
And turn'd my captive state to liberty,
My fear to hope, my sorrows unto joys,
At our enlargement what are thy due fees?
LIEU. Subjects may challenge nothing of their sovereigns;
But if an humble prayer may prevail,
I then crave pardon of your majesty.
K. HEN. For what, lieutenant? for well using me?
Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure;
Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds
Conceive, when after many moody thoughts,

5 *enlargement*] release from prison.

At last, by notes of household harmony,
They quite forget their loss of liberty.
But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free,
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee;
He was the author, thou the instrument.
Therefore, that I may conquer fortune's spite
By living low, where fortune cannot hurt me,
And that the people of this blessed land
May not be punish'd with my thwarting stars,
Warwick, although my head still wear the crown,
I here resign my government to thee,
For thou art fortunate in all thy deeds.
WAR. Your grace hath still been famed for virtuous;
And now may seem as wise as virtuous,
By spying and avoiding fortune's malice,
For few men rightly temper with the stars:
Yet in this one thing let me blame your grace,
For choosing me when Clarence is in place.
CLAR. No, Warwick, thou art worthy of the sway,
To whom the heavens in thy nativity
Adjudged an olive branch and laurel crown,
As likely to be blest in peace and war;
And therefore I yield thee my free consent.
WAR. And I choose Clarence only for protector.
K. HEN. Warwick and Clarence, give me both your hands:
Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts,
That no dissension hinder government:

29 *rightly . . . stars*] suit, accommodate their conduct to, their destiny.
31 *in place*] present. Cf. IV, i, 103, *supra*.

I make you both protectors of this land,
While I myself will lead a private life,
And in devotion spend my latter days,
To sin's rebuke and my Creator's praise.
WAR. What answers Clarence to his sovereign's will?
CLAR. That he consents, if Warwick yield consent;
For on thy fortune I repose myself.
WAR. Why, then, though loath, yet must I be content:
We'll yoke together, like a double shadow
To Henry's body, and supply his place;
I mean, in bearing weight of government,
While he enjoys the honour and his ease.
And, Clarence, now then it is more than needful
Forthwith that Edward be pronounced a traitor,
And all his lands and goods be confiscate.
CLAR. What else? and that succession be determined.
WAR. Ay, therein Clarence shall not want his part.
K. HEN. But, with the first of all your chief affairs,
Let me entreat, for I command no more,
That Margaret your queen and my son Edward
Be sent for, to return from France with speed;
For, till I see them here, by doubtful fear
My joy of liberty is half eclipsed.
CLAR. It shall be done, my sovereign, with all speed.
K. HEN. My Lord of Somerset, what youth is that,
Of whom you seem to have so tender care?
SOM. My liege, it is young Henry, earl of Richmond.

K. Hen. Come hither, England's hope. [*Lays his hand on his head*] If secret powers
Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.
His looks are full of peaceful majesty,
His head by nature framed to wear a crown,
His hand to wield a sceptre, and himself
Likely in time to bless a regal throne.
Make much of him, my lords, for this is he
Must help you more than you are hurt by me.

Enter a Post

War. What news, my friend?
Post. That Edward is escaped from your brother,
And fled, as he hears since, to Burgundy.
War. Unsavoury news! but how made he escape?
Post. He was convey'd by Richard duke of Gloucester
And the Lord Hastings, who attended him
In secret ambush on the forest side,
And from the bishop's huntsmen rescued him;
For hunting was his daily exercise.
War. My brother was too careless of his charge.
But let us hence, my sovereign, to provide
A salve for any sore that may betide.

[*Exeunt all but Somerset, Richmond, and Oxford.*

68 *England's hope*] Henry, Earl of Richmond, son of Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, was afterwards Henry VII. The reference which Henry VI makes to him in the text is drawn almost verbatim from the chroniclers Hall and Holinshed.

82 *attended*] waited for.

SOM. My lord, I like not of this flight of Edward's;
For doubtless Burgundy will yield him help,
And we shall have more wars before 't be long.
As Henry's late presaging prophecy
Did glad my heart with hope of this young Richmond,
So doth my heart misgive me, in these conflicts
What may befall him, to his harm and ours:
Therefore, Lord Oxford, to prevent the worst,
Forthwith we'll send him hence to Brittany,
Till storms be past of civil enmity.
OXF. Ay, for if Edward repossess the crown,
'T is like that Richmond with the rest shall down.
SOM. It shall be so; he shall to Brittany.
Come, therefore, let's about it speedily. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII — BEFORE YORK

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, *and* Soldiers

K. EDW. Now, brother Richard, Lord Hastings, and the rest,
Yet thus far fortune maketh us amends,
And says that once more I shall interchange
My waned state for Henry's regal crown.
Well have we pass'd and now repass'd the seas,
And brought desired help from Burgundy:
What then remains, we being thus arrived

From Ravenspurgh haven before the gates of York,
But that we enter, as into our dukedom?
GLOU. The gates made fast! Brother, I like not this;
For many men that stumble at the threshold
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.
K. EDW. Tush, man, abodements must not now affright us:
By fair or foul means we must enter in,
For hither will our friends repair to us.
HAST. My liege, I'll knock once more to summon them.

Enter, on the walls, the Mayor of York *and his Brethren*

MAY. My lords, we were forewarned of your coming,
And shut the gates for safety of ourselves;
For now we owe allegiance unto Henry.
K. EDW. But, master mayor, if Henry be your king,
Yet Edward at the least is Duke of York.
MAY. True, my good lord; I know you for no less.
K. EDW. Why, and I challenge nothing but my dukedom,
As being well content with that alone.
GLOU. [*Aside*] But when the fox hath once got in his nose,
He'll soon find means to make the body follow.

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8 *Ravenspurgh*] Ravenspur, on the coast of Yorkshire. The Quartos often print the word *Raunspur*, a dissyllable. It should be pronounced dissyllabically in this irregular line.

13 *abodements*] forebodings, evil omens. Cf. V, vi, 45: "*aboding* luckless time."

HAST. Why, master mayor, why stand you in a doubt?
Open the gates; we are King Henry's friends.
MAY. Ay, say you so? the gates shall then be open'd. [*They descend.*
GLOU. A wise stout captain, and soon persuaded!
HAST. The good old man would fain that all were well,
So 't were not 'long of him; but being enter'd,
I doubt not, I, but we shall soon persuade
Both him and all his brothers unto reason.

Enter the Mayor *and two* Aldermen, *below*

K. EDW. So, master mayor: these gates must not be shut
But in the night or in the time of war.
What! fear not, man, but yield me up the keys;
[*Takes his keys.*
For Edward will defend the town and thee,
And all those friends that deign to follow me.

March. Enter MONTGOMERY, *with drum and soldiers*

GLOU. Brother, this is Sir John Montgomery,
Our trusty friend, unless I be deceived.

31–32 *The good old man . . . of him*] The Mayor is anxious to do as he is requested, but does not wish to be blamed for his complaisance; "'long [*i. e.* along] of him" means "because of" or "through him."

40 *Sir John Montgomery*] This ally of King Edward was correctly Sir *Thomas* Montgomery. He had previously been in the service of

K. Edw. Welcome, Sir John! But why come you in arms?

Montg. To help King Edward in his time of storm,
As every loyal subject ought to do.

K. Edw. Thanks, good Montgomery; but we now forget
Our title to the crown, and only claim
Our dukedom till God please to send the rest.

Montg. Then fare you well, for I will hence again:
I came to serve a king, and not a duke.
Drummer, strike up, and let us march away.

[*The drum begins to march.*

K. Edw. Nay, stay, Sir John, a while, and we'll debate
By what safe means the crown may be recover'd.

Montg. What talk you of debating? in few words,
If you'll not here proclaim yourself our king,
I'll leave you to your fortune, and be gone
To keep them back that come to succour you:
Why shall we fight, if you pretend no title?

Glou. Why, brother, wherefore stand you on nice points?

K. Edw. When we grow stronger, then we'll make our claim:
Till then, 't is wisdom to conceal our meaning.

Hast. Away with scrupulous wit! now arms must rule.

Henry VI. His brother, Sir *John*, who was always a faithful Lancastrian, was beheaded by Edward IV, in the third year of his reign.

57 *pretend no title*] make no pretension to the title.

GLOU. And fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.
Brother, we will proclaim you out of hand;
The bruit thereof will bring you many friends.
K. EDW. Then be it as you will; for 't is my right,
And Henry but usurps the diadem.
MONTG. Ay, now my sovereign speaketh like himself;
And now will I be Edward's champion.
HAST. Sound trumpet; Edward shall he here proclaim'd:
Come, fellow-soldier, make thou proclamation.
[*Flourish.*
SOLD. Edward the Fourth, by the grace of God, king of England and France, and lord of Ireland, &c.
MONTG. And whosoe'er gainsays King Edward's right,
By this I challenge him to single fight.
[*Throws down his gauntlet.*
ALL. Long live Edward the Fourth!
K. EDW. Thanks, brave Montgomery; and thanks unto you all:
If fortune serve me, I'll requite this kindness.
Now, for this night, let's harbour here in York;
And when the morning sun shall raise his car
Above the border of this horizon,
We'll forward towards Warwick and his mates;

63 *out of hand*] straight away, immediately.
64 *bruit*] report.
80 *horizon*] The accent falls on the first and last syllables, not on the second syllable, as in modern speech.

For well I wot that Henry is no soldier.
Ah, froward Clarence! how evil it beseems thee,
To flatter Henry and forsake thy brother!
Yet, as we may, we'll meet both thee and Warwick.
Come on, brave soldiers: doubt not of the day,
And, that once gotten, doubt not of large pay. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII — LONDON

THE PALACE

Flourish. Enter KING HENRY, WARWICK, MONTAGUE, CLARENCE, EXETER, *and* OXFORD

WAR. What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,
With hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders,
Hath pass'd in safety through the narrow seas,
And with his troops doth march amain to London;
And many giddy people flock to him.

K. HEN. Let's levy men, and beat him back again.

CLAR. A little fire is quickly trodden out;
Which, being suffer'd, rivers cannot quench.

WAR. In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,
Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war;
Those will I muster up: and thou, son Clarence,
Shalt stir up in Suffolk, Norfolk and in Kent,

3 *the narrow seas*] See note on I, i, 239, where the term is applied to the St. George's Channel, between Dover and Calais. Here it is used of the passage between England and Holland.

8 *suffer'd*] *sc.* to spread.

The knights and gentlemen to come with thee:
Thou, brother Montague, in Buckingham,
Northampton and in Leicestershire, shalt find
Men well inclined to hear what thou command'st:
And thou, brave Oxford, wondrous well beloved,
In Oxfordshire shalt muster up thy friends.
My sovereign, with the loving citizens,
Like to his island girt in with the ocean,
Or modest Dian circled with her nymphs,
Shall rest in London till we come to him.
Fair lords, take leave and stand not to reply.
Farewell, my sovereign.

K. HEN. Farewell, my Hector, and my Troy's true hope.

CLAR. In sign of truth, I kiss your highness' hand.

K. HEN. Well-minded Clarence, be thou fortunate!

MONT. Comfort, my lord; and so I take my leave.

OXF. And thus I seal my truth, and bid adieu.

K. HEN. Sweet Oxford, and my loving Montague,
And all at once, once more a happy farewell.

WAR. Farewell, sweet lords: let's meet at Coventry.

[Exeunt all but King Henry and Exeter.

K. HEN. Here at the palace will I rest a while.
Cousin of Exeter, what thinks your lordship?
Methinks the power that Edward hath in field
Should not be able to encounter mine.

EXE. The doubt is that he will seduce the rest.

---

25 *Hector . . . hope*] See II, i, 51, *supra*, where Richard, Duke of York, is described as the "hope of Troy."

37 *The doubt is*] The fear is.

K. Hen. That's not my fear; my meed hath got me fame:
I have not stopp'd mine ears to their demands,
Nor posted off their suits with slow delays;
My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,
My mildness hath allay'd their swelling griefs,
My mercy dried their water-flowing tears;
I have not been desirous of their wealth,
Nor much oppress'd them with great subsidies,
Nor forward of revenge, though they much err'd:
Then why should they love Edward more than me?
No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace:
And when the lion fawns upon the lamb,
The lamb will never cease to follow him.

[*Shout within*, "A Lancaster! A Lancaster!"

Exe. Hark, hark, my lord! what shouts are these?

Enter King Edward, Gloucester, *and* Soldiers

K. Edw. Seize on the shame-faced Henry, bear him hence;
And once again proclaim us king of England.
You are the fount that makes small brooks to flow:
Now stops thy spring; my sea shall suck them dry,

---

38 *meed*] merit.

40 *posted off*] put off. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, III, i, 255: "*posted* over," *i. e.*, hurriedly passed by.

43 *water-flowing tears*] tears flowing like water. Cf. II, i, 80, *supra*, *furnace-burning*, *i. e.*, "burning like a furnace," and V, i, 57, *infra*, "*Wind-changing* Warwick."

46 *forward of*] eager for.

And swell so much the higher by their ebb.
Hence with him to the Tower; let him not speak.
[*Exeunt some with King Henry.*
And, lords, towards Coventry bend we our course,
Where peremptory Warwick now remains:
The sun shines hot; and, if we use delay,
Cold biting winter mars our hoped-for hay.
GLOU. Away betimes, before his forces join,
And take the great-grown traitor unawares:
Brave warriors, march amain towards Coventry.
[*Exeunt.*

61 *Cold . . . hay*] A variant of the common proverb "Make *hay* while the sun shines."

ACT FIFTH — SCENE I

COVENTRY

Enter WARWICK, *the* Mayor of Coventry, *two* Messengers, *and others upon the walls*

WARWICK

WHERE IS THE POST THAT came from valiant Oxford? How far hence is thy lord, mine honest fellow?

FIRST MESS. By this at Dunsmore, marching hitherward.

WAR. How far off is our brother Montague? Where is the post that came from Montague?

SECOND MESS. By this at Daintry, with a puissant troop.

Enter SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE

WAR. Say, Somerville, what says my loving son? And, by thy guess, how nigh is Clarence now?

6 *Daintry*] Daventry, a town in Northamptonshire, about thirty miles from Coventry.

SOM. At Southam I did leave him with his forces,
And do expect him here some two hours hence.
[*Drum heard.*
WAR. Then Clarence is at hand; I hear his drum.
SOM. It is not his, my lord; here Southam lies:
The drum your honour hears marcheth from Warwick.
WAR. Who should that be? belike, unlook'd-for friends.
SOM. They are at hand, and you shall quickly know.

March. Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, *and* Soldiers

K. EDW. Go, trumpet, to the walls, and sound a parle.
GLOU. See how the surly Warwick mans the wall!
WAR. O unbid spite! is sportful Edward come?
Where slept our scouts, or how are they seduced,
That we could hear no news of his repair?
K. EDW. Now, Warwick, wilt thou ope the city gates,
Speak gentle words and humbly bend thy knee,
Call Edward king and at his hands beg mercy?
And he shall pardon thee these outrages.
WAR. Nay, rather, wilt thou draw thy forces hence,
Confess who set thee up and pluck'd thee down,
Call Warwick patron and be penitent?
And thou shalt still remain the Duke of York.
GLOU. I thought, at least, he would have said the king;
Or did he make the jest against his will?

---

18 *unbid . . . sportful*] uncalled for . . . lascivious.
20 *repair*] approach.

WAR. Is not a dukedom, sir, a goodly gift?
GLOU. Ay, by my faith, for a poor earl to give:
I'll do thee service for so good a gift.
WAR. 'T was I that gave the kingdom to thy brother.
K. EDW. Why then 't is mine, if but by Warwick's gift.
WAR. Thou art no Atlas for so great a weight:
And, weakling, Warwick takes his gift again;
And Henry is my king, Warwick his subject.
K. EDW. But Warwick's king is Edward's prisoner:
And, gallant Warwick, do but answer this:
What is the body when the head is off?
GLOU. Alas, that Warwick had no more forecast,
But, whiles he thought to steal the single ten,
The king was slily finger'd from the deck!
You left poor Henry at the bishop's palace,
And, ten to one, you'll meet him in the Tower.
K. EDW. 'T is even so; yet you are Warwick still.
GLOU. Come, Warwick, take the time; kneel down, kneel down:
Nay, when? strike now, or else the iron cools.
WAR. I had rather chop this hand off at a blow,

33 *I'll do thee service*] I'll enrol myself in thy service.
43–44 *single ten . . . deck*] The language is that of the card-table. The "ten" (cf. *T. of Shrew*, II, i, 407: "a card of ten") and the "king" are familiar names of playing cards. "The single ten," where "single" has the significance of "feeble," is a reference to Clarence. The "deck" was the term commonly applied to a pack of cards; "finger'd from the deck" means "filched from the pack."
45 *the bishop's palace*] the palace of the bishop of London.
49 *Nay, when?*] A common ejaculatory of impatience.

And with the other fling it at thy face,
Than bear so low a sail, to strike to thee.

K. Edw. Sail how thou canst, have wind and tide thy friend,
This hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair,
Shall, whiles thy head is warm and new cut off,
Write in the dust this sentence with thy blood,
"Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more."

Enter Oxford, *with drum and colours*

War. O cheerful colours! see where Oxford comes!

Oxf. Oxford, Oxford, for Lancaster!

[*He and his forces enter the city.*

Glou. The gates are open, let us enter too.

K. Edw. So other foes may set upon our backs.
Stand we in good array; for they no doubt
Will issue out again and bid us battle:
If not, the city being but of small defence,
We'll quickly rouse the traitors in the same.

War. O, welcome, Oxford! for we want thy help.

Enter Montague, *with drum and colours*

Mont. Montague, Montague, for Lancaster!

[*He and his forces enter the city.*

Glou. Thou and thy brother both shall buy this treason
Even with the dearest blood your bodies bear.

57 "*Wind-changing*] Changing with the wind. Cf. II, i, 80, *supra*, and IV, viii, 43.

68 *buy*] pay for.

K. Edw. The harder match'd, the greater victory:
My mind presageth happy gain and conquest.

Enter Somerset, *with drum and colours*

Som. Somerset, Somerset, for Lancaster!
[*He and his forces enter the city.*

Glou. Two of thy name, both Dukes of Somerset,
Have sold their lives unto the house of York;
And thou shalt be the third, if this sword hold.

Enter Clarence, *with drum and colours*

War. And lo, where George of Clarence sweeps along,
Of force enough to bid his brother battle;
With whom an upright zeal to right prevails
More than the nature of a brother's love!
Come, Clarence, come; thou wilt, if Warwick call.

Clar. Father of Warwick, know you what this means? [*Taking his red rose out of his hat.*
Look here, I throw my infamy at thee:
I will not ruinate my father's house,
Who gave his blood to lime the stones together,
And set up Lancaster. Why, trow'st thou, Warwick,

---

73 *Two of thy name*] The father and elder brother of the present Duke of Somerset both lost their lives while fighting for Henry VI, the father at the first battle of St. Albans, May 22, 1455, and the brother, who for a very brief while previously transferred his allegiance to King Edward, after the battle of Hexham, April 25, 1464. Cf. IV, i, 6, and IV, ii, 3–7, *supra*. The present Duke was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury, May 4, 1471. Cf. V, v, 3, and V, vii, 5, *infra*.

81 (stage direction) [*Taking . . . hat*] This stage direction, omitted from the Folios, was restored by Theobald from the Quartos.

That Clarence is so harsh, so blunt, unnatural,
To bend the fatal instruments of war
Against his brother and his lawful king?
Perhaps thou wilt object my holy oath:
To keep that oath were more impiety
Than Jephthah's, when he sacrificed his daughter.
I am so sorry for my trespass made
That, to deserve well at my brother's hands,
I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe,
With resolution, wheresoe'er I meet thee —
As I will meet thee, if thou stir abroad —
To plague thee for thy foul misleading me.
And so, proud-hearted Warwick, I defy thee,
And to my brother turn my blushing cheeks.
Pardon me, Edward, I will make amends:
And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults,
For I will henceforth be no more unconstant.

K. Edw. Now welcome more, and ten times more beloved,
Than if thou never hadst deserved our hate.

Glou. Welcome, good Clarence; this is brother-like.

War. O passing traitor, perjured and unjust!

K. Edw. What, Warwick, wilt thou leave the town, and fight?
Or shall we beat the stones about thine ears?

War. Alas, I am not coop'd here for defence!

---

86 *blunt*] stupid, insensible (to fraternal feeling).

91 *Jephthah's*] Cf. *Judges* xi, 30 *seq.*: "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord."

106 *passing*] surpassing, egregious.

I will away towards Barnet presently,
And bid thee battle, Edward, if thou darest.
K. Edw. Yes, Warwick, Edward dares, and leads the way.
Lords, to the field; Saint George and victory!
[*Exeunt King Edward and his company. March. Warwick and his company follow.*

SCENE II — A FIELD OF BATTLE NEAR BARNET

Alarum and excursions. Enter King Edward, *bringing forth* Warwick *wounded*

K. Edw. So, lie thou there: die thou, and die our fear;
For Warwick was a bug that fear'd us all.
Now, Montague, sit fast; I seek for thee,
That Warwick's bones may keep thine company. [*Exit.*
War. Ah, who is nigh? come to me, friend or foe,
And tell me, who is victor, York or Warwick?
Why ask I that? my mangled body shows,
My blood, my want of strength, my sick heart shows,
That I must yield my body to the earth
And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.
Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,

2 *Warwick . . . fear'd*] Warwick was a *bugbear* that *frightened* us all. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, I, ii, 207: "*fear* boys with *bugs*."

Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading tree,
And kept low shrubs from winter's powerful wind.
These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's black veil,
Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun,
To search the secret treasons of the world:
The wrinkles in my brows, now fill'd with blood,
Were liken'd oft to kingly sepulchres;
For who lived king, but I could dig his grave?
And who durst smile when Warwick bent his brow?
Lo, now my glory smear'd in dust and blood!
My parks, my walks, my manors that I had,
Even now forsake me, and of all my lands
Is nothing left me but my body's length.
Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?
And, live we how we can, yet die we must.

Enter OXFORD *and* SOMERSET

SOM. Ah, Warwick, Warwick! wert thou as we are,
We might recover all our loss again:
The queen from France hath brought a puissant power:
Even now we heard the news: ah, couldst thou fly!

WAR. Why, then I would not fly. Ah, Montague,
If thou be there, sweet brother, take my hand,
And with thy lips keep in my soul a while!
Thou lovest me not; for, brother, if thou didst,
Thy tears would wash this cold congealed blood,

14 *Jove's spreading tree*] the oak. Cf. Virgil, *Georgics*, III, 332: *magna Jovis . . . quercus.*

That glues my lips and will not let me speak.
Come quickly, Montague, or I am dead.

SOM. Ah, Warwick! Montague hath breathed his last;

And to the latest gasp cried out for Warwick,
And said "Commend me to my valiant brother."
And more he would have said, and more he spoke,
Which sounded like a clamour in a vault,
That mought not be distinguish'd; but at last
I well might hear, delivered with a groan,
"O, farewell, Warwick!"

WAR. Sweet rest his soul! Fly, lords, and save yourselves;
For Warwick bids you all farewell, to meet in heaven.
[*Dies.*

OXF. Away, away, to meet the queen's great power!
[*Here they bear away his body. Exeunt.*

SCENE III — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD *in triumph; with* GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, *and the rest*

K. EDW. Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,
And we are graced with wreaths of victory.
But, in the midst of this bright-shining day,
I spy a black, suspicious, threatening cloud,

44 *clamour*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *cannon.*

That will encounter with our glorious sun,
Ere he attain his easeful western bed:
I mean, my lords, those powers that the queen
Hath raised in Gallia have arrived our coast,
And, as we hear, march on to fight with us.
CLAR. A little gale will soon disperse that cloud,
And blow it to the source from whence it came:
Thy very beams will dry those vapours up,
For every cloud engenders not a storm.
GLOU. The queen is valued thirty thousand strong,
And Somerset, with Oxford, fled to her:
If she have time to breathe, be well assured
Her faction will be full as strong as ours.
K. EDW. We are advertised by our loving friends
That they do hold their course toward Tewksbury:
We, having now the best at Barnet field,
Will thither straight, for willingness rids way;
And, as we march, our strength will be augmented
In every county as we go along.
Strike up the drum; cry "Courage!" and away.

[*Exeunt.*

5 *our glorious sun*] the cognizance or badge of the House of York. Cf. II, i, 39–40, *supra.*

8 *arrived*] often used, as here, in the transitive sense of "reach."

12 *Thy very beams*] Cf. line 5, *supra:* "our glorious sun."

21 *willingness rids way*] willingness gets rid of distance. Cf. Peele's *Arraignment of Paris,* III, i, 88 (*Works,* ed. Bullen, Vol, I, p. 40): "my game is quick, and *rids a length of ground.*"

SCENE IV — PLAINS NEAR TEWKSBURY

March. *Enter* QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, SOMERSET, OXFORD, *and* Soldiers

Q. MAR. Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.
What though the mast be now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood?
Yet lives our pilot still. Is 't meet that he
Should leave the helm, and like a fearful lad
With tearful eyes add water to the sea,
And give more strength to that which hath too much,
Whiles, in his moan, the ship splits on the rock,
Which industry and courage might have saved?
Ah, what a shame! ah, what a fault were this!
Say Warwick was our anchor; what of that?
And Montague our topmast; what of him?
Our slaughter'd friends the tackles; what of these?
Why, is not Oxford here another anchor?
And Somerset another goodly mast?
The friends of France our shrouds and tacklings?
And, though unskilful, why not Ned and I
For once allow'd the skilful pilot's charge?

4 *holding-anchor*] sheet-anchor.

8–9 *With tearful eyes . . . too much*] A stock sentiment. Cf. *As You Like It*, II, i, 42–49, and *Sonnet* cxxxv, 9–10: "The sea, all water, yet receives rain still, And *in abundance addeth to his store.*"

We will not from the helm to sit and weep,
But keep our course, though the rough wind say no,
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wreck.
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.
And what is Edward but a ruthless sea?
What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?
And Richard but a ragged fatal rock?
All these the enemies to our poor bark.
Say you can swim; alas, 't is but a while!
Tread on the sand; why, there you quickly sink:
Bestride the rock; the tide will wash you off,
Or else you famish; that's a threefold death.
This speak I, lords, to let you understand,
If case some one of you would fly from us,
That there's no hoped-for mercy with the brothers,
More than with ruthless waves, with sands and rocks.
Why, courage then! what cannot be avoided
'T were childish weakness to lament or fear.

PRINCE. Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit
Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,
Infuse his breast with magnanimity,
And make him, naked, foil a man at arms.
I speak not this as doubting any here;
For did I but suspect a fearful man,
He should have leave to go away betimes,
Lest in our need he might infect another,
And make him of like spirit to himself.
If any such be here — as God forbid! —
Let him depart before we need his help.

23 *shelves*] sandbanks.

OXF. Women and children of so high a courage,
And warriors faint! why, 't were perpetual shame.
O brave young prince! thy famous grandfather
Doth live again in thee: long mayst thou live
To bear his image and renew his glories!
SOM. And he that will not fight for such a hope,
Go home to bed, and like the owl by day,
If he arise, be mock'd and wonder'd at.
Q. MAR. Thanks, gentle Somerset; sweet Oxford, thanks.
PRINCE. And take his thanks that yet hath nothing else.

Enter a Messenger

MESS. Prepare you, lords, for Edward is at hand,
Ready to fight; therefore be resolute.
OXF. I thought no less: it is his policy
To haste thus fast, to find us unprovided.
SOM. But he's deceived; we are in readiness.
Q. MAR. This cheers my heart, to see your forwardness.
OXF. Here pitch our battle; hence we will not budge.

Flourish and March. Enter KING EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE *and* Soldiers

K. EDW. Brave followers, yonder stands the thorny wood,
Which, by the heavens' assistance and your strength,
Must by the roots be hewn up yet ere night.
I need not add more fuel to your fire,

For well I wot ye blaze to burn them out:
Give signal to the fight, and to it, lords!

Q. Mar. Lords, knights, and gentlemen, what I should say
My tears gainsay; for every word I speak,
Ye see, I drink the water of mine eyes.
Therefore, no more but this: Henry, your sovereign,
Is prisoner to the foe; his state usurp'd,
His realm a slaughter-house, his subjects slain,
His statutes cancell'd, and his treasure spent;
And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil.
You fight in justice: then, in God's name, lords,
Be valiant, and give signal to the fight.

[*Alarum: Retreat: Excursions. Exeunt.*

SCENE V — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Flourish. Enter King Edward, Gloucester, Clarence, *and* soldiers; *with* Queen Margaret, Oxford, *and* Somerset, *prisoners*

K. Edw. Now here a period of tumultuous broils.
Away with Oxford to Hames Castle straight:
For Somerset, off with his guilty head.
Go, bear them hence; I will not hear them speak.

75 *I drink . . eyes*] Cf. *Psalm* lxxx, 5: "Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and *givest them tears to drink.*"

1 *period*] cessation.

2 *Hames Castle*] The famous castle in Picardy, then still in English hands, where many famous persons have been imprisoned; notably Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III, from 1840 to 1846.

OXF. For my part, I'll not trouble thee with words.
SOM. Nor I, but stoop with patience to my fortune.
[Exeunt Oxford and Somerset, guarded.
Q. MAR. So part we sadly in this troublous world,
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.
K. EDW. Is proclamation made, that who finds Edward
Shall have a high reward, and he his life?
GLO. It is: and lo, where youthful Edward comes!

Enter Soldiers, *with* PRINCE EDWARD

K. EDW. Bring forth the gallant, let us hear him speak.
What! can so young a thorn begin to prick?
Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make
For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,
And all the trouble thou hast turn'd me to?
PRINCE. Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York!
Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;
Resign thy chair, and where I stand kneel thou,
Whilst I propose the selfsame words to thee,
Which, traitor, thou wouldst have me answer to.
Q. MAR. Ah, that thy father had been so resolved!
GLOU. That you might still have worn the petticoat,
And ne'er have stol'n the breech from Lancaster.

---

16 *turn'd me to*] put me to, caused me. Cf. *Tempest*, I, ii, 64: "the teen that I have *turn'd you to*."

24 *stol'n the breech*] a reference to the proverbial wearing of the breeches by a shrewish wife. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, I, iii, 144: "Though in this place most master wear no *breeches*."

PRINCE. Let Æsop fable in a winter's night;
His currish riddles sort not with this place.
GLOU. By heaven, brat, I'll plague ye for that word.
Q. MAR. Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men.
GLOU. For God's sake, take away this captive scold.
PRINCE. Nay, take away this scolding crook-back rather.
K. EDW. Peace, wilful boy, or I will charm your tongue.
CLAR. Untutor'd lad, thou art too malapert.
PRINCE. I know my duty; you are all undutiful:
Lascivious Edward, and thou perjured George,
And thou mis-shapen Dick, I tell ye all
I am your better, traitors as ye are:
And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine.
K. EDW. Take that, thou likeness of this railer here.
[*Stabs him.*
GLOU. Sprawl'st thou? take that, to end thy agony.
[*Stabs him.*
CLAR. And there's for twitting me with perjury.
[*Stabs him.*
Q. MAR. O, kill me too!
GLOU. Marry, and shall. [*Offers to kill her.*
K. EDW. Hold, Richard, hold; for we have done too much.

25 *Æsop*] The fabulist was commonly reputed to be a hunchback.
31 *charm your tongue*] silence your tongue. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, iv, i, 64: "*charm* thy riotous *tongue*."
38 *this railer*] a reference to the prince's railing mother.

GLOU. Why should she live, to fill the world with words?

K. EDW. What, doth she swoon? use means for her recovery.

GLOU. Clarence, excuse me to the king my brother;
I'll hence to London on a serious matter:
Ere ye come there, be sure to hear some news.

CLAR. What? what?

GLOU. The Tower, the Tower. [*Exit.*

Q. MAR. O Ned, sweet Ned! speak to thy mother, boy!
Canst thou not speak? O traitors! murderers!
They that stabb'd Cæsar shed no blood at all,
Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,
If this foul deed were by to equal it:
He was a man; this, in respect, a child:
And men ne'er spend their fury on a child.
What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?
No, no, my heart will burst, an if I speak:
And I will speak, that so my heart may burst.
Butchers and villains! bloody cannibals!
How sweet a plant have you untimely cropp'd!
You have no children, butchers! if you had,
The thought of them would have stirr'd up remorse:
But if you ever chance to have a child,

---

44 *words*] contentious words, disputes.

56 *in respect*] in comparison.

63 *You have no children*] Cf. *Macb.*, IV, iii, 217: "He has *no children*"; said by Macduff of Macbeth.

64 *remorse*] pity.

Look in his youth to have him so cut off,
As, deathsmen, you have rid this sweet young prince!

K. Edw. Away with her; go, bear her hence perforce.

Q. Mar. Nay, never bear me hence, dispatch me here;
Here sheathe thy sword, I'll pardon thee my death:
What, wilt thou not? then, Clarence, do it thou.

Clar. By heaven, I will not do thee so much ease.

Q. Mar. Good Clarence, do; sweet Clarence, do thou do it.

Clar. Didst thou not hear me swear I would not do it?

Q. Mar. Ay, but thou usest to forswear thyself:
'T was sin before, but now 't is charity.
What, wilt thou not? Where is that devil's butcher,
Hard-favour'd Richard? Richard, where art thou?
Thou art not here: murder is thy alms-deed;
Petitioners for blood thou ne'er put'st back.

K. Edw. Away, I say; I charge ye, bear her hence.

Q. Mar. So come to you and yours, as to this prince! [*Exit, led out forcibly.*

K. Edw. Where's Richard gone?

Clar. To London, all in post; and, as I guess,
To make a bloody supper in the Tower.

K. Edw. He's sudden, if a thing comes in his head.
Now march we hence: discharge the common sort

---

67 *As, deathsmen, . . . rid*] As executioners you have cut off, destroyed.
78 *Hard-favour'd*] Ill-favoured, ugly.
84 *in post*] in post-haste. Cf. I, ii, 48, *supra*.

With pay and thanks, and let's away to London,
And see our gentle queen how well she fares:
By this, I hope, she hath a son for me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI — LONDON

THE TOWER

Enter KING HENRY *and* GLOUCESTER, *with the* Lieutenant, *on the walls*

GLOU. Good day, my lord. What, at your book so hard?

K. HEN. Ay, my good lord: — my lord, I should say rather;
'T is sin to flatter; "good" was little better:
"Good Gloucester" and "good devil" were alike,
And both preposterous; therefore, not "good lord."

GLOU. Sirrah, leave us to ourselves: we must confer.
[*Exit Lieutenant.*

K. HEN. So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf;
So first the harmless sheep doth yield his fleece,
And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.
What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?

GLOU. Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

---

10 *Roscius*] The most famous of Roman actors (d. 62 B.C.). His name was commonly used by Elizabethans as a general appellation of tragic actors, though as a matter of history his fame was made in comedy.

K. Hen. The bird that hath been limed in a bush,
With trembling wings misdoubteth every bush;
And I, the hapless male to one sweet bird,
Have now the fatal object in my eye,
Where my poor young was limed, was caught and kill'd.
Glou. Why, what a peevish fool was that of Crete,
That taught his son the office of a fowl!
And yet, for all his wings, the fool was drown'd.
K. Hen. I, Dædalus; my poor boy, Icarus;
Thy father, Minos, that denied our course;
The sun that sear'd the wings of my sweet boy
Thy brother Edward, and thyself the sea
Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.
Ah, kill me with thy weapon, not with words!
My breast can better brook thy dagger's point,
Than can my ears that tragic history.
But wherefore dost thou come? is 't for my life?
Glou. Think'st thou I am an executioner?
K. Hen. A persecutor, I am sure, thou art:
If murdering innocents be executing,
Why, then thou art an executioner.

---

13 *limed in a bush*] snared in a bush smeared with birdlime. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, I, iii, 86: "myself have *limed a bush* for her."

15 *male*] male parent, father.

21 *Dædalus . . . Icarus*] According to the story told by Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, VIII, 183–235), Dædalus, being imprisoned with his son Icarus in Crete by King Minos, made wings for himself and his son, wherewith to escape by flight. But Icarus flew too near the sun. The wax which attached the wings to his body melted, and the youth, falling into the sea, was drowned.

GLOU. Thy son I kill'd for his presumption.
K. HEN. Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst presume,
Thou hadst not lived to kill a son of mine.
And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand,
Which now mistrust no parcel of my fear,
And many an old man's sigh and many a widow's,
And many an orphan's water-standing eye —
Men for their sons, wives for their husbands,
And orphans for their parents' timeless death —
Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.
The owl shriek'd at thy birth, — an evil sign;
The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;
Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;
The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,
And chattering pies in dismal discords sung.
Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,
And yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,
To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,
Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.
Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,
To signify thou camest to bite the world:

---

38 *mistrust no parcel of my fear*] suspect no particle of the evils which my fears presage.

45 *night-crow*] the night raven. Cf. *Much Ado*, II, iii, 83. Neither the raven nor the crow is a night bird. The reference may be to some sort of owl or to the bittern or the night-jar.

aboding] foreboding. Cf. IV, vii, 13, *supra*, "abodements," and *Othello*, IV, i, 21–22, "the *raven* . . . *Boding* to all."

47 *rook'd her*] squatted or roosted; *her* is the "dativus ethicus."

And, if the rest be true which I have heard,
Thou camest —

GLOU. I'll hear no more: die, prophet, in thy speech:
[*Stabs him.*
For this, amongst the rest, was I ordain'd.

K. HEN. Ay, and for much more slaughter after this.
O, God forgive my sins, and pardon thee! [*Dies.*

GLOU. What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.
See how my sword weeps for the poor king's death!
O, may such purple tears be alway shed
From those that wish the downfall of our house!
If any spark of life be yet remaining,
Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither:
[*Stabs him again.*
I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.
Indeed, 't is true that Henry told me of;
For I have often heard my mother say
I came into the world with my legs forward:
Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,
And seek their ruin that usurp'd our right?
The midwife wonder'd, and the women cried
"O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!"
And so I was; which plainly signified
That I should snarl and bite and play the dog.
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.
I have no brother, I am like no brother;

56 *Thou camest* —] Henry is about to add that Gloucester came into the world with his legs forward, as Gloucester himself states at line 71, *infra.*

And this word "love," which greybeards call divine,
Be resident in men like one another,
And not in me: I am myself alone.
Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light:
But I will sort a pitchy day for thee;
For I will buz abroad such prophecies
That Edward shall be fearful of his life,
And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.
King Henry and the prince his son are gone:
Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest,
Counting myself but bad till I be best.
I'll throw thy body in another room,
And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.

[*Exit, with the body.*

SCENE VII — LONDON

THE PALACE

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD, QUEEN ELIZABETH, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, *a* Nurse *with the young* Prince, *and* Attendants

K. EDW. Once more we sit in England's royal throne,
Re-purchased with the blood of enemies.
What valiant foemen, like to autumn's corn,
Have we mow'd down in tops of all their pride!
Three Dukes of Somerset, threefold renown'd
For hardy and undoubted champions;
Two Cliffords, as the father and the son;

85 *I will sort . . . thee*] I will choose, or provide, a black day for thee. Cf. *Rich. III*, II, ii, 148–150: "I'll *sort* occasion . . . To part the queen's proud kindred from the king."

And two Northumberlands; two braver men
Ne'er spurr'd their coursers at the trumpet's sound;
With them, the two brave bears, Warwick and Montague,
That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion,
And made the forest tremble when they roar'd.
Thus have we swept suspicion from our seat,
And made our footstool of security.
Come hither, Bess, and let me kiss my boy.
Young Ned, for thee, thine uncles and myself
Have in our armours watch'd the winter's night,
Went all afoot in summer's scalding heat,
That thou mightst repossess the crown in peace:
And of our labours thou shalt reap the gain.

GLOU. [*Aside*] I'll blast his harvest, if your head were laid;
For yet I am not look'd on in the world.
This shoulder was ordain'd so thick to heave;
And heave it shall some weight, or break my back:
Work thou the way, — and thou shalt execute.

K. EDW. Clarence and Gloucester, love my lovely queen;
And kiss your princely nephew, brothers both.

---

10 *two brave bears*] a reference to the well-known badge of the bear and the ragged staff borne by the house of Warwick and afterwards by Queen Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, V, i, 144, where York likewise calls Warwick and his brother "two brave bears," and mentions the shaking of their chains.

23 *to heave*] in order to lift heavy weights.

25 *Work . . . execute*] Gloucester first touches his head, and then looks down at his hand.

CLAR. The duty that I owe unto your majesty
I seal upon the lips of this sweet babe.
Q. ELIZ. Thanks, noble Clarence; worthy brother, thanks.
GLOU. And, that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st,
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.
[*Aside*] To say the truth, so Judas kiss'd his master,
And cried, "all hail!" when as he meant all harm.
K. EDW. Now am I seated as my soul delights,
Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.
CLAR. What will your grace have done with Margaret?
Reignier, her father, to the King of France
Hath pawn'd the Sicils and Jerusalem,
And hither have they sent it for her ransom.
K. EDW. Away with her, and waft her hence to France.
And now what rest but that we spend the time
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,
Such as befits the pleasure of the court?
Sound drums and trumpets! farewell sour annoy!
For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy. [*Exeunt.*

39 *the Sicils*] the two kingdoms of Sicily, *viz.*, Naples and Sicily. Cf. I, iv, 122, *supra.*

40 *it*] the sum for which the kingdoms were pawned.

43 *triumphs*] public festivities.

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A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
BY SIDNEY LEE

VOLUME X

KING RICHARD III

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM P. TRENT
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY FRED ROE

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CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction to King Richard III by William P. Trent	ix
Text of the Play	1

INTRODUCTION

IT would seem at first thought that the relegation to another hand of such knotty problems as the comparative authority of the folio and the quarto texts of "Richard III," the influence or the share of Marlowe in its composition, and its precise chronological place in the series of Shakespeare's dramas, would make the task of furnishing a brief critical introduction to the play a matter of no great labour or consequence. Whether, indeed, it is a matter of consequence may be doubted, in view of the fact that any note, essay, paper, monograph, or even treatise on a Shakespearean topic is but a drop in that vast ocean of criticism which fortunately has not yet submerged the broad continent of the dramatist's achievements and

fame. But that the task of criticising the play at all adequately involves considerable labour and perplexity on the part of the venturous critic admits of no doubt. "Richard III" is not only not an easy play to criticise; it is a very hard one.

The textual and kindred problems have their æsthetic analogues. For example, the critic finds himself confronted by the fact that although "Richard III" is rarely ranked among the greater Shakesperean plays by modern readers, it was perhaps the most popular of all the plays with readers of the first half of the seventeenth century. There were six quarto editions between 1597 and 1623, the date of the first folio; there were two others within eleven years after that time. Counting the second folio of 1632, we find that "Richard III" was printed ten times within thirty-seven years, — a test of contemporary popularity that is borne successfully by no other of Shakespeare's plays. Was this popularity due to the extraordinary favour then as now extended to the drama on the stage? Or was it due in considerable measure to the uncritical taste of the readers of Shakespeare's day? Or was it due, instead, to the fact that a vigorous, unsophisticated generation was better qualified than their less robust and more fastidious descendants to appreciate the work of a daring young playwright and poet?

But the æsthetic critic has other questions to consider and answer as best he may. He has to consider why "Richard III" is not a good enough play in the eyes of some critics to be accepted as truly and in the main

Shakespeare's handiwork, and why in the eyes of other critics it is one of the great dramatist's most remarkable and admirably wrought performances. For example, although James Russell Lowell may have lived to modify some of the views he expressed about the drama in an address before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution in 1883, afterwards published in his volume entitled "Latest Literary Essays," the fact remains that he seriously doubted Shakespeare's authorship of "Richard III" in any proper and complete sense, and that he did so on grounds highly uncomplimentary to the style and substance of the play. On the other hand, critics like Ulrici see in the drama a conscious and admirable exposition of the part played by the ideal tyrant in human affairs; others, like Professor Moulton, see in it a consummate presentation of an ideal villain and a closely woven chain of Nemesis-actions in which private and public crimes meet with their just retribution.

But not only do critics differ in their attitude toward the tragedy as a whole; they differ widely in their views with regard to individual scenes and characters. To Professor Dowden, for instance, the figure of Queen Margaret prophesying destruction to her foes is "introduced without historical warrant, but in a manner most impressive." To other critics both queens and the old duchess form a "scolding mob"; and even those writers who are timid in condemning the scenes of prophecy and vituperation from the point of view of literary effectiveness are often willing to admit that, when the drama is witnessed on

actors almost invariably attempt to succeed in the rôle of the Crookback, they none the less admit in one way or another that they would rather be a great Hamlet, a great Iago, than a great Richard. As illustrations of Shakespeare's wide-embracing genius, "Macbeth," "Antony and Cleopatra," "As You Like It," and "The Tempest," to name no others, are obviously too admirable to be mentioned with "Richard III." Even among the historical plays proper, it does not begin to rank in importance with the two parts of "Henry IV," and most readers would place it below "King John" and, perhaps, "Richard II." Such prentice plays as "Titus Andronicus," "Love's Labour's Lost," "The Comedy of Errors," the three parts of "Henry VI," and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" may well be deemed inferior to it as wholes; but one reason for assigning "Richard III" to 1593 and for placing "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Romeo and Juliet" after that date may be found in an unwillingness to believe that Shakespeare's poetic genius, strictly speaking, could have declined from the two latter plays to the former. To base any sort of argument upon such a feeling would, of course, be preposterous; yet the feeling throws light upon the poetical standing of "Richard III" among Shakespeare's dramas.

But we need not compare the play with this or that Shakespearean poetic masterpiece in order to convince ourselves of its failure to attain the heights of great poetry. Truly great poetry requires great substance

wedded to great style. And the element of greatness, in both respects, must be uniform, not spasmodic. But the unrelieved scolding scenes, the weakness of most of the characters save Richard, the mechanical and unconvincing use of the supernatural, — these and many other features of the play prevent us from feeling that it is uniformly great in substance. It lacks, except for Richard's grim irony, the humour needed to humanise such a tragedy. It does not sufficiently combine breadth of view with intensity of perception and feeling. The audacity with which the hero's character is portrayed is an element of greatness that naturally should not be underrated, — only a dramatist who was also a poet would have conceived such an artist in villany or could have presented him so effectively, — but other elements of greatness are sacrificed to this one, and, as we shall soon see, if Richard escapes being a monstrosity it is only because the drama that exhibits his career becomes in respect to plot something resembling a *tour de force.*

Nor is the case improved when we turn to consider "Richard III" from the point of view of poetic style. Critics have often compared the protagonist of this play as an apotheosis of evil with the Satan of "Paradise Lost," but there is surely no comparison between the styles in which their respective speeches are couched. Of the memorable passages and lines furnished by the drama — such as Clarence's dream and the opening verses

> "Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this sun of York" —

a majority appeal to our sense for rhetoric rather than to our sense for poetry. To be sure, such lines as

> "Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
> And dallies with the wind and scorns the sun ; "

and

> "To seek the empty, vast, and wandering air,"

are worthy of Shakespeare in his prime ; but lines of such beauty and power are seldom met with in "Richard III," and how little do even they sustain comparison with lines of such quality as

> "The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven,"

or

> "Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,
> Doing or suffering : but of this be sure —
> To do aught good never will be our task."

But a comparison in point of full weighted poetic style between the youthful Shakespeare and the mature Milton is hardly fair. It is better for our purposes to observe that "Richard III" not only has far less poetic charm of style than other plays of Shakespeare that precede and immediately follow it, as well as far less poetic subtlety and power of style than the later plays, but that it has considerably less poetic eloquence, as Lowell remarked, than the other historical plays, with which it seems fair to compare it. This eloquence, combined with Shakespeare's burning patriotism, is found at its full height in the very slightly later apostrophe to England uttered by the dying John o' Gaunt in "Richard II."

The tyrant's address to his troops at the close of the tragedy we are considering has some gleams of this eloquence and pride in England, but the play as a whole lacks the lift of high poetic eloquence just as it lacks poetic richness and charm and power. Indeed, it is scarcely too much to say that Colley Cibber's notorious "Richard's himself again" is not so completely out of keeping with the tone of the play he altered as some critics would have us believe. This is not to affirm that the style of "Richard III" is not, in many respects, well adapted to the purposes Shakespeare had in mind in composing his drama, but only to maintain that that style in its diction, its tropes, its rhythm, comes short of illustrating the main stylistic resources of great poetry. It may be doubted whether the poetic style of "Richard III" reaches Marlowe's level, which is one reason for believing that this true poet but far from eminent dramaturgist had no actual share in its composition. On the other hand, not only do Shakespeare's complete reliance upon blank-verse, his introduction of a lyrical element, and his insistence upon an overweening personality and passion prove that in writing "Richard III" he consciously or unconsciously subjected himself to Marlowe's influence, but, as somewhat alien features of Shakespeare's work, they perhaps in part explain the submergence of his humour, his eloquence, and his poetic charm and power.

Enough has been said in favour of the contentions of those critics who find "Richard III" unsatisfactory on the poetic side. But we must not, with some of them,

conclude that it is a play which Shakespeare did not write *de novo* or thoroughly refashion, but merely adapted for the stage, scarcely even touching it up in the final portions. Such a conclusion would imply that Shakespeare could at no time in his career have wittingly or unwittingly subordinated his poetic to his dramaturgic instinct. Such an assumption appears to be contradicted by two early plays. In "The Comedy of Errors" Shakespeare's dramaturgic instinct was surely in the ascendant; in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" his poetic instinct as surely got the upper hand. Even after he had fused the two instincts in that supreme masterpiece "Othello" he allowed the poetic instinct to conquer in "Cymbeline" and "The Winter's Tale" and restored the balance perfectly in "The Tempest." These facts, whether they are due to Shakespeare's own conscious art or are only perceived by us in his dramas, prevent us from concluding that "Richard III" is not truly Shakespeare's handiwork until we have considered the play from the dramaturgic side. This is not saying, of course, that it may not, like many another of this royal plunderer's plays, be more or less based upon an earlier version of the same theme, but only that we must not dwell exclusively upon the poetical deficiencies of "Richard III" or draw unwarranted conclusions therefrom.

A technical study of "Richard III" from the dramaturgic point of view would probably bring out clearly Shakespeare's growth as a playwright, his superiority to his inspirer Marlowe in framing a well-knit action, his in-

stinct for emphasising the essential scenes, even if in this play there is an excess of lyrical and other extraneous matter. Such results would not, however, justify us in concluding that Shakespeare's dramaturgic successes in "Richard III" fairly balance his poetical deficiencies — would not enable us to occupy the safe middle ground we are seeking between the extreme admirers and the extreme depreciators of the play. What we need is not so much a study in technical dramatic construction as a study which shall set in relief Shakespeare's dominant motive and shall show us in a large way how he accomplished his purposes.

Such a study has been attempted by Professor Moulton in his "Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist." Like most other similar studies, but probably to a less extent than those due to German enthusiasts, it shows too great a tendency to read into "Richard III" far more conscious art than it is easy to believe the affluent and far from meticulous Shakespeare ever expended upon it. To Virgil and Milton one may attribute almost every clearly admirable artistic procedure ascribed to them by their devotees, but this is scarcely true of Homer or Shakespeare or Molière. Nevertheless, while analytic and interpretative critics may have read more into "Richard III" than they should, it is our duty to apply their constructive methods as fairly as we have tried to apply the destructive methods of the critics of poetic style and substance.

When this has once been done it will be hard to resist

the conclusion that in writing or refashioning "Richard III" Shakespeare's dominant motive, apart from practical considerations such as a further exploitation of the public's liking for chronicle-plays based upon interesting events in the national history, was his desire to portray an ideal villain. That he should have conceived such a desire was doubtless partly owing to the fact that a grandiose, unique, and hazardous subject usually appeals with special force to a young author, and also to the fact that he had come under the influence of the more precocious genius of Marlowe. Shakespeare owed it, however, to his own dramatic genius and to his training as a professional playwright that he was able to accomplish his desire without, as Marlowe was too wont to do, giving his ideal character a distorted setting in a more or less poorly articulated and evolved plot.

That the Richard of Shakespeare — it is only the student of literary sources and the historian who think of the Richard of Hollinshed and More and Cardinal Morton, or of the enigmatical Richard of the dim contentious past — is the ideal villain, or, perhaps better, the consummate human embodiment of the principle of evil, is a commonplace of interpretative criticism on which it is needless to enlarge. Richard is not merely the typical tyrant, he is not merely a subtle ambitious plotter and a remorseless destroyer of all who cross his path; he is also a true artist in villany, a devotee of crime for crime's sake. There is more than statecraft in his wooing of Anne, more than mere political scheming in his plan of

receiving at his hypocritical devotions the credulous Lord Mayor and the sheepish flock of citizens. The audacity and success with which Shakespeare has developed the mature master of crime who makes what personages and circumstances he chooses serve him at will out of the distorted young devil of the "Third Part of Henry VI" are acknowledged by almost all critics and readers.

But many persons have felt a doubt whether after all Shakespeare did not overreach himself and create a monster instead of an arch-villain. Richard may fascinate the most cool-headed of us for a time, but we are bound sooner or later to rub our eyes and ask — "Could such things ever have been?" It is but a step from this question to Lowell's assertion that the action of the tragedy is melodramatic; and if we yield our assent to this charge we are logically almost bound to conclude, not only that Richard is a more or less impossible villain, but that to admire the play he dominates, either in the theatre or in the closet, is somewhat discreditable to our taste and inimical to that æsthetic training to which many of us desire to submit ourselves. Such a conclusion sets itself, however, against the instincts of generations of playgoers and readers, and, if it be a correct one, makes some of us, fresh from the perusal of the compelling drama, rebel against the tyranny of æsthetic reasoning.

But is "Richard III" a melodrama or a melodramatic tragedy? Is not such a view of it possible only to critics over-alive to its poetical defects? This seems to be the case when we give due weight to the claims of critics

who have carefully analysed its plot. They point to the fact that Richard's victims — Clarence, the Queen's kindred, Hastings, Buckingham — have by their own crimes forfeited our full pity. They show how Nemesis broods over the whole play — how the fates of Richard and of nearly all the subordinate characters are artfully inwoven Nemesis-actions. In other words, they make us feel that so carefully wrought a plot cannot be crudely melodramatic and that a stupendous villain is a proper balance to a stupendous Nemesis. They make us feel also that such an exhibition of dramaturgic skill can scarcely with justice be regarded as a mere Marlowesque experiment in the exploitation of an overweening character and passion, or as a performance unworthy of the youthful genius of Shakespeare.

It should, however, be admitted that while the skilfully constructed plot enhances the artistic merits of the play, it fails to produce its full effects because with scarcely an exception all the characters save Richard himself are either weak by nature or else, as with Queen Margaret and the young princes, impotent through the force of situation. There is, in consequence, too feeble a struggle of human wills to produce the impression that we are seeing or reading a tragedy of maximum impressiveness. Furthermore it is extremely doubtful whether the average spectator or reader is qualified to work out the complicated Nemesis scheme with sufficient ease to increase his æsthetic pleasure. What such a spectator or reader probably does is to set Providence over against

Richard and watch for the issue. Providence might almost be considered the hero of the drama and Richard the villain, were it not for the fact that there is something fascinating in extreme power of any kind embodied in one whom we recognise as belonging to the same species with ourselves, even though he is distorted in body and mind and soul. It is this fascination that makes Richard win the interest of spectator and reader much as he secured the submission of Anne to his unnatural wooing. It makes him in a true sense the hero of the play and imparts to that a poetical quality which it is easy not to take sufficiently into account. In making Richard a fascinating embodiment of the principle of evil, — not merely a consummate villain like Iago, or a splendid scoundrel like Edmund, or a despicable wretch like Don John, — Shakespeare, even if he sacrificed his other characters, and the power and charm of his poetic style, achieved a triumph, not comparable indeed in splendour to those of his maturity, but measurably worthy of his genius and perhaps impossible to any other man.

We are now prepared to take our safe middle ground and to sum up in a general way the claims this drama has upon the attention and respect of the reader and student of Shakespeare. It is an extraordinarily powerful presentation of an exceptionally potent evil character, and is also a subtly interwoven series of actions moving to a just and inevitable catastrophe. Technically speaking, it is a chronicle-play that has been knit into a well-constructed drama — that has been stiffened

into tragedy by the infusion of tremendous will-power into a single character. This will-power set over against Nemesis or Providence produces in spectator and reader that sense of absorption in a struggle which is essential to true drama, especially to tragedy. "Richard III" also marks the fact that Shakespeare has set behind him the crude tragedy-of-blood. He will still make use of this, as in "Hamlet," but he has at least ceased to strew the stage with victims of revenge, although he has contrived to introduce enough deaths to please both pit and gallery. In other words, he has advanced from the gory tragedy-of-blood and the panoramic chronicle-play to the tragedy of character presented in an historical setting. The great tragedies, comedies, history plays, and romances of characters as opposed to a single dominating character surrounded by puppets and personages were not possible to the young Shakespeare of "Richard III"; but the author of that drama, or its refashioner if we will, even if we regard his creation only as a marvellous *tour de force*, was not so far removed from the creator of "Lear" and "Hamlet" as criticism of his early work merely from the point of view of poetry might easily lead one to suppose. It is permissible, of course, much to prefer seeing "Richard III" acted to reading it, and the lover of poetry may find more satisfaction in complying with Richard II's wish —

> "For heaven's sake let us sit upon the ground,
> And tell sad stories of the death of kings" —

than in listening to the wails of the two queens and the duchess; but it is surely uncritical not to remember that a blank-verse play may be memorable as drama, but not as poetry, and that even a Shakespeare's genius is subject to the law of evolution. Compared with the three parts of "Henry VI," with which it is usually held to make a chronicle-tetralogy of a Marlowesque type, with "Titus Adronicus," and the other indisputably early plays, as well as with the early or late works of most of Shakespeare's rivals, "Richard III" is a sufficiently impressive piece of dramatic work to make us forbear to wonder that it has held the stage for over three centuries,[1] and that it was probably the most popular of all his plays with the robustly imaginative readers of Shakespeare's time.

W. P. Trent.

[1] For a long time, of course, it was Cibber's version that held the stage, — a fact which has occasioned much exaggerated vituperation of the later playwright.

KING RICHARD III

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

KING EDWARD the Fourth.
EDWARD, Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward V., } sons to
RICHARD, Duke of York, } the King.
GEORGE, Duke of Clarence,
RICHARD, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III. } brothers to the King.
A young son of Clarence.
HENRY, Earl of Richmond, afterwards King Henry VII.
CARDINAL BOURCHIER, Archbishop of Canterbury.
THOMAS ROTHERHAM, Archbishop of York.
JOHN MORTON, Bishop of Ely.
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.
DUKE OF NORFOLK.
EARL OF SURREY, his son.
EARL RIVERS, brother to Elizabeth.
MARQUIS OF DORSET and LORD GREY, sons to Elizabeth.
EARL OF OXFORD.
LORD HASTINGS.
LORD STANLEY, called also EARL OF DERBY.
LORD LOVEL.
SIR THOMAS VAUGHAN.
SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF.
SIR WILLIAM CATESBY.
SIR JAMES TYRREL.
SIR JAMES BLOUNT.
SIR WALTER HERBERT.
SIR ROBERT BRAKENBURY, Lieutenant of the Tower.
SIR WILLIAM BRANDON.
CHRISTOPHER URSWICK, a priest. Another Priest.
TRESSEL and BERKELEY, gentlemen attending on the Lady Anne.
Lord Mayor of London. Sheriff of Wiltshire.

ELIZABETH, queen to King Edward IV.
MARGARET, widow of King Henry VI.
DUCHESS OF YORK, mother to King Edward IV.
LADY ANNE, widow of Edward Prince of Wales, son to King Henry VI.; afterwards married to Richard.
A young daughter of Clarence (MARGARET PLANTAGENET).

Ghosts of those murdered by Richard III., Lords and other Attendants; a Pursuivant, Scrivener, Citizens, Murderers, Messengers, Soldiers, &c.

SCENE: *England*

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[1] The play was first printed in 1597 in a Quarto volume which was reissued in 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622, 1629, and 1634. The First Folio text of 1623 presents a version, differing at many points — sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse — from that of the Quartos. The Folio first supplied a complete division into Acts and Scenes. A list of "dramatis personae" with indication of the "Scene" was first supplied by Rowe in 1709.

ACT FIRST — SCENE I — LONDON

A STREET

Enter RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, *solus*

GLOUCESTER

NOW IS THE WINTER OF our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;

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2 *this sun of York*] a punning reference to the badge of the "blazing sun" adopted by Edward IV. See *3 Hen. VI*, II, i, 25 *seq.*

And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,

10 *barbed*] caparisoned with warlike trappings.

18 *this fair proportion*] the fair shape (which "serves love's majesty"), l. 16.

19 *Cheated . . . nature*] Robbed of attractive figure by distorting nature. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, ii, 98–99: "What wicked and *dissembling* glass of mine Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?"

24 *piping time of peace*] the pipe and tabor were usual emblems of peace, as the drum and fife were of war.

27 *descant*] comment; a "descant" is properly a musical accompaniment. Cf. III, vii, 49, *infra:* "a holy *descant.*"

29 *these fair . . . days*] these happy, prosperous days. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, iv, 6: "brisk and giddy-paced times."

I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the king
In deadly hate the one against the other:
And if King Edward be as true and just
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,
About a prophecy, which says that G
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here Clarence comes.

Enter CLARENCE, *guarded, and* BRAKENBURY

Brother, good day: what means this armed guard
That waits upon your grace?
CLAR. His majesty,
Tendering my person's safety, hath appointed
This conduct to convey me to the Tower.
GLOU. Upon what cause?

32 *inductions*] preparatory steps, groundwork. Cf. IV, iv, 5, *infra:* "A dire *induction* am I witness to."

38 *mew'd up*] confined. Cf. line 132, *infra*, and I, iii, 139.

39 *a prophecy . . . G*] G is the initial of Clarence's Christian name George. According to Hall and Holinshed, King Edward was greatly disturbed by "a foolish prophesie which was that after K. Edward one should reigne, whose first letter of his name should be a G." Clarence at lines 55–59, *infra*, describes in fuller detail the fear with which the letter G inspired the king.

44 *Tendering*] Having tender regard for.

45 *conduct*] escort.

CLAR. Because my name is George.
GLOU. Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours;
He should, for that, commit your godfathers:
O, belike his majesty hath some intent
That you shall be new-christen'd in the Tower.
But what's the matter, Clarence? may I know?
CLAR. Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest
As yet I do not: but, as I can learn,
He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;
And from the cross-row plucks the letter G,
And says a wizard told him that by G
His issue disinherited should be;
And, for my name of George begins with G,
It follows in his thought that I am he.
These, as I learn, and such like toys as these
Have moved his highness to commit me now.
GLOU. Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women:
'T is not the king that sends you to the Tower;
My Lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 't is she
That tempers him to this extremity.
Was it not she and that good man of worship,
Anthony Woodville, her brother there,
That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,

55 *cross-row*] alphabet; more frequently called "criss-cross-row." "Criss-cross" is a corruption of "Christ's cross," the prayer "Christ's cross be my speed" commonly standing at the head of the alphabet as printed in the elementary school books of the day.

65 *tempers him to this*] Thus the First Quarto. "Tempers" means "frames" or "disposes." The Folios substitute *tempts him to this harsh.*

From whence this present day he is deliver'd?
We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.
CLAR. By heaven, I think there's no man is secure,
But the queen's kindred and night-walking heralds,
That trudge betwixt the king and Mistress Shore.
Heard ye not what an humble suppliant
Lord Hastings was to her for his delivery?
GLOU. Humbly complaining to her deity
Got my lord chamberlain his liberty.
I'll tell you what; I think it is our way,
If we will keep in favour with the king,
To be her men and wear her livery:
The jealous o'erworn widow and herself,
Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen,
Are mighty gossips in this monarchy.
BRAK. I beseech your graces both to pardon me;
His majesty hath straitly given in charge
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with his brother.
GLOU. Even so; an 't please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of any thing we say:
We speak no treason, man: we say the king
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen
Well struck in years, fair, and not jealous;
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;
And that the queen's kindred are made gentle-folks:
How say you, sir? can you deny all this?

81 *o'erworn widow and herself*] Edward IV's Queen and Jane Shore.

BRAK. With this, my lord, myself have nought to do.
GLOU. Naught to do with Mistress Shore! I tell thee, fellow,
He that doth naught with her, excepting one,
Were best he do it secretly alone.
BRAK. What one, my lord?
GLOU. Her husband, knave: wouldst thou betray me?
BRAK. I beseech your grace to pardon me, and withal
Forbear your conference with the noble duke.
CLAR. We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.
GLOU. We are the queen's abjects, and must obey.
Brother, farewell: I will unto the king;
And whatsoever you will employ me in,
Were it to call King Edward's widow sister,
I will perform it to enfranchise you.
Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood
Touches me deeper than you can imagine.
CLAR. I know it pleaseth neither of us well.
GLOU. Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;
I will deliver you, or else lie for you:
Meantime, have patience.
CLAR. I must perforce. Farewell.

[*Exeunt Clarence, Brakenbury, and Guard.*

98–99 *Naught . . . naught*] a quibble between "nought," *i. e.*, nothing, and "naught," *i. e.*, naughtily.

106 *abjects*] base slaves, the scum of the people. Cf. *Psalm* xxxv, 15: "Yea, the *abjects* gathered themselves together against me."

115 *lie for you*] lie imprisoned in your stead.

GLOU. Go tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return,
Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,
If heaven will take the present at our hands.
But who comes here? the new-deliver'd Hastings?

Enter LORD HASTINGS

HAST. Good time of day unto my gracious lord!
GLOU. As much unto my good lord chamberlain!
Well are you welcome to the open air.
How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?
HAST. With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must:
But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks
That were the cause of my imprisonment.
GLOU. No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;
For they that were your enemies are his,
And have prevail'd as much on him as you.
HAST. More pity that the eagle should be mew'd,
While kites and buzzards prey at liberty.
GLOU. What news abroad?
HAST. No news so bad abroad as this at home;
The king is sickly, weak and melancholy,
And his physicians fear him mightily.
GLOU. Now, by Saint Paul, this news is bad indeed.
O, he hath kept an evil diet long,

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131 *on him*] against him.

132 *mew'd*] Cf. line 38, *supra*, "*mew'd* up," and I, iii, 139, *infra*. Hawks were "mewed" or kept in confinement while moulting.

137 *fear him*] fear for, are anxious about, him.

And overmuch consumed his royal person:
'T is very grievous to be thought upon.
What, is he in his bed?

HAST. He is.

GLOU. Go you before, and I will follow you.

[*Exit Hastings.*

He cannot live, I hope; and must not die,
Till George be pack'd with post-horse up to heaven.
I'll in, to urge his hatred more to Clarence,
With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;
And, if I fail not in my deep intent,
Clarence hath not another day to live:
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,
And leave the world for me to bustle in!
For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.
What though I kill'd her husband and her father?
The readiest way to make the wench amends
Is to become her husband and her father:
The which will I, not all so much for love,
As for another secret close intent,
By marrying her which I must reach unto.
But yet I run before my horse to market:
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns:
When they are gone, then must I count my gains.

[*Exit.*

153 *Warwick's youngest daughter*] Anne, younger daughter of the Earl of Warwick, had been affianced (rather than actually married) to Henry VI's son, Edward, Prince of Wales, who was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury, May 4, 1471. Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, III, iii, 242, where Lady Anne is wrongly described as the elder of Warwick's daughters.

SCENE II — THE SAME

ANOTHER STREET

Enter the corpse of KING HENRY THE SIXTH, Gentlemen *with halberds to guard it;* LADY ANNE *being the mourner*

ANNE. Set down, set down your honourable load —
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse —
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament
The untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.
Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!
Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!
Be it lawful that I invocate thy ghost,
To hear the lamentations of poor Anne,
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughtered son,
Stabb'd by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!
Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life
I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.
Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes!
Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it!
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!
More direful hap betide that hated wretch,
That makes us wretched by the death of thee,
Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!
If ever he have child, abortive be it,

3 *obsequiously*] in due payment of funeral obsequies or rites.
5 *key-cold*] cold as a key; in common use as an intensitive of "cold."

Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect
May fright the hopeful mother at the view;
And that be heir to his unhappiness!
If ever he have wife, let her be made
As miserable by the death of him,
As I am made by my poor lord and thee!
Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,
Taken from Paul's to be interred there;
And still, as you are weary of the weight,
Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corse.

Enter GLOUCESTER

GLOU. Stay, you that bear the corse, and set it down.
ANNE. What black magician conjures up this fiend,
To stop devoted charitable deeds?
GLOU. Villains, set down the corse; or, by Saint Paul,
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys.
GENT. My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.
GLOU. Unmanner'd dog! stand thou, when I command:
Advance thy halberd higher than my breast,
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot,
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.
ANNE. What, do you tremble? are you all afraid?
Alas, I blame you not; for you are mortal,

22 *Prodigious*] Like a prodigy or monster.

27–28 *As miserable . . . thee*] These lines are quoted with slight change by Lady Anne, IV, i, 76–77, *infra*.

And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.
Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,
His soul thou canst not have; therefore, be gone.
GLOU. Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.
ANNE. Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.
O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh.
Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
For 't is thy presence that exhales this blood
From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,
Provokes this deluge most unnatural.
O God, which this blood madest, revenge his death!
O earth, which this blood drink'st, revenge his death!
Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead,
Or earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,

58 *exhales*] draws forth. Cf. line 165, *infra*. It was a popular notion that a murdered corpse bled in presence of the murderer. Holinshed, when describing the carriage of Henry VI's body from the Tower to St. Paul's, and thence to Blackfriars, whence it was conveyed by river to the monastery at Chertsey, notes that the corpse bled in St. Paul's Cathedral, and again at Blackfriars. According to the chroniclers, Lady Anne did not attend Henry VI's funeral. The dialogue between her and Richard is wholly imaginary.

As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood,
Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!
GLOU. Lady, you know no rules of charity,
Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.
ANNE. Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man:
No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.
GLOU. But I know none, and therefore am no beast.
ANNE. O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!
GLOU. More wonderful, when angels are so angry.
Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,
Of these supposed evils, to give me leave,
By circumstance, but to acquit myself.
ANNE. Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,
For these known evils, but to give me leave,
By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.
GLOU. Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have
Some patient leisure to excuse myself.
ANNE. Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make
No excuse current, but to hang thyself.
GLOU. By such despair, I should accuse myself.
ANNE. And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused
For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,
Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

77 *circumstance*] circumstantial detail.

78 *defused*] Thus the early editions, for which the Third and Fourth Folios substitute *diffus'd*. The word means "uncouthly spread," "shapeless."

infection] used in the ordinary sense of "pestilence."

GLOU. Say that I slew them not?
ANNE. Why, then they are not dead:
But dead they are, and, devilish slave, by thee.
GLOU. I did not kill your husband.
ANNE. Why, then he is alive.
GLOU. Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.
ANNE. In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw
Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood;
The which thou once didst bend against her breast,
But that thy brothers beat aside the point.
GLOU. I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,
Which laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.
ANNE. Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind,
Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:
Didst thou not kill this king?
GLOU. I grant ye.
ANNE. Dost grant me, hedgehog? then, God grant me too
Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!
O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!
GLOU. The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.
ANNE. He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.
GLOU. Let him thank me, that holp to send him thither;
For he was fitter for that place than earth.
ANNE. And thou unfit for any place but hell.

GLOU. Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.
ANNE. Some dungeon.
GLOU. Your bed-chamber.
ANNE. Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest!
GLOU. So will it, madam, till I lie with you.
ANNE. I hope so.
GLOU. I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,
To leave this keen encounter of our wits,
And fall somewhat into a slower method,
Is not the causer of the timeless deaths
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,
As blameful as the executioner?
ANNE. Thou art the cause, and most accursed effect.
GLOU. Your beauty was the cause of that effect;
Your beauty, which did haunt me in my sleep
To undertake the death of all the world,
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.
ANNE. If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.
GLOU. These eyes could never endure sweet beauty's wreck;
You should not blemish it, if I stood by:
As all the world is cheered by the sun,
So I by that; it is my day, my life.

117 *timeless*] untimely.

120 *effect*] effecter, doer, executioner. The act is put for the agent. In the next line "effect" is employed in the ordinary manner, and means "the deaths of these Plantagenets."

ANNE. Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!
GLOU. Curse not thyself, fair creature; thou art both.
ANNE. I would I were, to be revenged on thee.
GLOU. It is a quarrel most unnatural,
To be revenged on him that loveth you.
ANNE. It is a quarrel just and reasonable,
To be revenged on him that slew my husband.
GLOU. He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,
Did it to help thee to a better husband.
ANNE. His better doth not breathe upon the earth.
GLOU. He lives that loves you better than he could.
ANNE. Name him.
GLOU. Plantagenet.
ANNE. Why, that was he.
GLOU. The selfsame name, but one of better nature.
ANNE. Where is he?
GLOU. Here. [*She spitteth at him.*] Why dost thou spit at me?
ANNE. Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!
GLOU. Never came poison from so sweet a place.
ANNE. Never hung poison on a fouler toad.
Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.
GLOU. Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.
ANNE. Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!
GLOU. I would they were, that I might die at once;
For now they kill me with a living death.
Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,

150 *basilisks*] fabulous reptiles who slew by a look.

Shamed their aspect with store of childish drops:
These eyes, which never shed remorseful tear,
No, when my father York and Edward wept,
To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made
When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him;
Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,
Told the sad story of my father's death,
And twenty times made pause to sob and weep,
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks,
Like trees bedash'd with rain: in that sad time
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.
I never sued to friend nor enemy;
My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing words;
But, now thy beauty is proposed my fee,
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.
[*She looks scornfully at him.*
Teach not thy lips such scorn, for they were made
For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.
If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,
Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;
Which if thou please to hide in this true bosom,
And let the soul forth that adoreth thee,
I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,
And humbly beg the death upon my knee.
[*He lays his breast open: she offers at it with his sword.*
Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,
But 't was thy beauty that provoked me.

165 *exhale*] draw forth. Cf. line 56, *supra*.

Nay, now dispatch; 't was I that stabb'd young Edward,
But 't was thy heavenly face that set me on.
[*Here she lets fall the sword.*
Take up the sword again, or take up me.
ANNE. Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,
I will not be the executioner.
GLOU. Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.
ANNE. I have already.
GLOU. Tush, that was in thy rage:
Speak it again, and, even with the word,
That hand, which, for thy love, did kill thy love,
Shall, for thy love, kill a far truer love;
To both their deaths shalt thou be accessary.
ANNE. I would I knew thy heart.
GLOU. 'T is figured in my tongue.
ANNE. I fear me both are false.
GLOU. Then never man was true.
ANNE. Well, well, put up your sword.
GLOU. Say, then, my peace is made.
ANNE. That shall you know hereafter.
GLOU. But shall I live in hope?
ANNE. All men, I hope, live so.
GLOU. Vouchsafe to wear this ring.
ANNE. To take is not to give.
GLOU. Look, how this ring encompasseth thy finger,
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.
And if thy poor devoted suppliant may
But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,
Thou dost confirm his happiness for ever.

ANNE. What is it?
GLOU. That it would please thee leave these sad designs
To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to Crosby Place;
Where, after I have solemnly interr'd
At Chertsey monastery this noble king,
And wet his grave with my repentant tears,
I will with all expedient duty see you:
For divers unknown reasons, I beseech you,
Grant me this boon.
ANNE. With all my heart; and much it joys me too,
To see you are become so penitent.
Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.
GLOU. Bid me farewell.
ANNE. 'T is more than you deserve;
But since you teach me how to flatter you,
Imagine I have said farewell already.
[*Exeunt Lady Anne, Tressel, and Berkeley.*
GLOU. Sirs, take up the corse.
GENT. Towards Chertsey, noble lord?
GLOU. No, to White-Friars; there attend my coming.
[*Exeunt all but Gloucester.*

212 *Crosby Place*] A fine house of timber and stone in Bishopsgate Street, London, built a few years before by Sir John Crosby, a prominent citizen of London. Richard occupied it while he was Protector. The building, after undergoing successive renovations, was demolished in January, 1908.

216 *expedient*] expeditious.

226 *White-Friars*] According to Holinshed, the corpse was taken to the religious house of the Dominicans, in the city of London, known as Blackfriars, and not to White-Friars, a neighbouring house of the

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.
What! I, that kill'd her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of her hatred by;
Having God, her conscience, and these bars against me,
And I nothing to back my suit at all,
But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!
Ha!
Hath she forgot already that brave prince,
Edward, her lord, whom I, some three months since,
Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewksbury?
A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,
Framed in the prodigality of nature,
Young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, right royal,
The spacious world cannot again afford:
And will she yet debase her eyes on me,
That cropp'd the golden prime of this sweet prince,
And made her widow to a woful bed?
On me, whose all not equals Edward's moiety?

Carmelites or white friars. Districts in the city of London are still familiarly known as Blackfriars and Whitefriars.

227–228 *Was . . . won*] Cf. *1 Hen. VI*, V, iii, 77–78: "She 's beautiful and therefore to be *woo'd*; She is a *woman*, therefore to be *won*," and *Tit. Andr.*, II, i, 82–83.

231 *take*] capture, captivate.

237 *all the world to nothing*] the odds against me being all the world to nothing.

On me, that halt and am unshapen thus?
My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
I do mistake my person all this while:
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
And entertain some score or two of tailors,
To study fashions to adorn my body:
Since I am crept in favour with myself,
I will maintain it with some little cost.
But first I'll turn yon fellow in his grave;
And then return lamenting to my love.
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,
That I may see my shadow as I pass. [*Exit.*

SCENE III — THE PALACE

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, LORD RIVERS, *and* LORD GREY

RIV. Have patience, madam: there's no doubt his majesty
Will soon recover his accustom'd health.

GREY. In that you brook it ill, it makes him worse:
Therefore, for God's sake, entertain good comfort,
And cheer his grace with quick and merry words.

Q. ELIZ. If he were dead, what would betide of me?

RIV. No other harm but loss of such a lord.

Q. ELIZ. The loss of such a lord includes all harm.

---

251 *denier*] a coin of very small value ; from the Latin *denarius*.
256 *entertain*] take into service.

GREY. The heavens have bless'd you with a goodly son,
To be your comforter when he is gone.
Q. ELIZ. Oh, he is young, and his minority
Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,
A man that loves not me, nor none of you.
RIV. Is it concluded he shall be protector?
Q. ELIZ. It is determined, not concluded yet:
But so it must be, if the king miscarry.

Enter BUCKINGHAM *and* DERBY

GREY. Here come the lords of Buckingham and Derby.
BUCK. Good time of day unto your royal grace!
DER. God make your majesty joyful as you have been!
Q. ELIZ. The Countess Richmond, good my Lord of Derby,
To your good prayers will scarcely say amen.
Yet, Derby, notwithstanding she's your wife,

15 *determined, not concluded*] settled, not formally recorded.

17 *Derby*] Both Folios and Quartos thus designate this lord, though in Act III, Sc. ii, and frequently in Act IV, he is called more correctly Lord Stanley. He was Thomas, Lord Stanley, who was created first Earl of Derby by Henry VII, after Richard III's death. The premature designation of Derby is due to Shakespeare's carelessness.

20 *The Countess Richmond*] Margaret, only child of John Beaufort, first Duke of Somerset, and descendant of John of Gaunt, had married Lord Stanley as her third husband. She was mother, by her first husband, Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, of King Henry VII.

And loves not me, be you, good lord, assured
I hate not you for her proud arrogance.
DER. I do beseech you, either not believe
The envious slanders of her false accusers;
Or, if she be accused in true report,
Bear with her weakness, which, I think, proceeds
From wayward sickness, and no grounded malice.
RIV. Saw you the king to-day, my Lord of Derby?
DER. But now the Duke of Buckingham and I
Are come from visiting his majesty.
Q. ELIZ. What likelihood of his amendment, lords?
BUCK. Madam, good hope; his grace speaks cheerfully.
Q. ELIZ. God grant him health! Did you confer with him?
BUCK. Madam, we did: he desires to make atonement
Betwixt the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers,
And betwixt them and my lord chamberlain;
And sent to warn them to his royal presence.
Q. ELIZ. Would all were well! but that will never be:
I fear our happiness is at the highest.

Enter GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, *and* DORSET

GLOU. They do me wrong, and I will not endure it:
Who are they that complain unto the king,
That I, forsooth, am stern and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his grace but lightly

29 *grounded malice*] inveterate hatred.
36 *atonement*] reconciliation.

That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours.
Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive and cog,
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abused
By silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

RIV. To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?

GLOU. To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.
When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?
A plague upon you all! His royal person —
Whom God preserve better than you would wish! —
Cannot be quiet scarce a breathing-while,
But you must trouble him with lewd complaints.

Q. ELIZ. Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter.
The king, of his own royal disposition,
And not provoked by any suitor else;
Aiming, belike, at your interior hatred,
Which in your outward actions shows itself
Against my kindred, brothers, and myself,
Makes him to send; that thereby he may gather
The ground of your ill-will, and to remove it.

48 *smooth . . . and cog*] cajole . . . and cheat.
53 *Jacks*] a common expression for "low fellows;" cf. line 72, *infra*.
61 *lewd*] vulgar, ignorant.
65 *interior*] inwardly cherished.
69 *to remove it*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios omit the words after

GLOU. I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad,
That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch:
Since every Jack became a gentleman,
There's many a gentle person made a Jack.
Q. ELIZ. Come, come, we know your meaning, brother Gloucester;
You envy my advancement and my friends':
God grant we never may have need of you!
GLOU. Meantime, God grants that we have need of you:
Our brother is imprison'd by your means,
Myself disgraced, and the nobility
Held in contempt; whilst many fair promotions
Are daily given to ennoble those
That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble.
Q. ELIZ. By Him that raised me to this careful height
From that contented hap which I enjoy'd,
I never did incense his majesty
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been
An earnest advocate to plead for him.
My lord, you do me shameful injury,
Falsely to draw me in these vile suspects.

---

ground. Capell reads *so remove it.* The grammatical construction is irregular, but not indefensible.

72 *Jack*] low fellow. Cf. line 53, *supra.*

82 *a noble*] a pun on the word in the sense of a gold coin, worth about 6*s.* 8*d.*

83 *careful*] full of care, anxiety.

89 *suspects*] suspicions. Cf. III, v, 32, *infra.* So "exclaims" for "exclamations," I, ii, 52, *supra.*

GLOU. You may deny that you were not the cause
Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.
RIV. She may, my lord, for —
GLOU. She may, Lord Rivers! why, who knows not so?
She may do more, sir, than denying that:
She may help you to many fair preferments;
And then deny her aiding hand therein,
And lay those honours on your high deserts.
What may she not? She may, yea, marry, may she, —
RIV. What, marry, may she?
GLOU. What, marry, may she! marry with a king,
A bachelor, a handsome stripling too:
I wis your grandam had a worser match.
Q. ELIZ. My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne
Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs:
By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty
With those gross taunts I often have endured.
I had rather be a country servant-maid
Than a great queen, with this condition,
To be thus taunted, scorn'd, and baited at:

Enter QUEEN MARGARET, *behind*

Small joy have I in being England's queen.
Q. MAR. And lessen'd be that small, God, I beseech thee!
Thy honour, state and seat is due to me.
GLOU. What! threat you me with telling of the king?
Tell him, and spare not: look, what I have said

I will avouch in presence of the king:
I dare adventure to be sent to the Tower.
'T is time to speak; my pains are quite forgot.
Q. Mar. Out, devil! I remember them too well:
Thou slewest my husband Henry in the Tower,
And Edward, my poor son, at Tewksbury.
Glou. Ere you were queen, yea, or your husband king,
I was a pack-horse in his great affairs;
A weeder out of his proud adversaries,
A liberal rewarder of his friends:
To royalise his blood I spilt mine own.
Q. Mar. Yea, and much better blood than his or thine.
Glou. In all which time you and your husband Grey
Were factious for the house of Lancaster;
And, Rivers, so were you. Was not your husband
In Margaret's battle at Saint Alban's slain?
Let me put in your minds, if you forget,
What you have been ere now, and what you are;
Withal, what I have been, and what I am.
Q. Mar. A murderous villain, and so still thou art.
Glou. Poor Clarence did forsake his father, Warwick;
Yea, and forswore himself, — which Jesu pardon! —
Q. Mar. Which God revenge!

---

117 *pains*] labours.

125 *royalise*] make royal. Cf. Peele's *Edward I*, line 12: "Whose chivalry hath *royaliz'd* thy fame."

GLOU. To fight on Edward's party for the crown;
And for his meed, poor lord, he is mew'd up.
I would to God my heart were flint, like Edward's;
Or Edward's soft and pitiful, like mine:
I am too childish-foolish for this world.
Q. MAR. Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave the world,
Thou cacodemon! there thy kingdom is.
RIV. My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days
Which here you urge to prove us enemies,
We follow'd then our lord, our lawful king:
So should we you, if you should be our king.
GLOU. If I should be! I had rather be a pedlar:
Far be it from my heart, the thought of it!
Q. ELIZ. As little joy, my lord, as you suppose
You should enjoy, were you this country's king,
As little joy may you suppose in me,
That I enjoy, being the queen thereof.
Q. MAR. A little joy enjoys the queen thereof;
For I am she, and altogether joyless.
I can no longer hold me patient. [*Advancing.*
Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out
In sharing that which you have pill'd from me!
Which of you trembles not that looks on me?
If not, that, I being queen, you bow like subjects,
Yet that, by you deposed, you quake like rebels?
O gentle villain, do not turn away!

---

139 *mew'd up*] Cf. I, i, 38 and 132, *supra.*
144 *cacodemon*] evil spirit.
159 *pill'd*] pillaged, plundered.

GLOU. Foul wrinkled witch, what makest thou in my sight?

Q. MAR. But repetition of what thou hast marr'd;
That will I make before I let thee go.

GLOU. Wert thou not banished on pain of death?

Q. MAR. I was; but I do find more pain in banishment,
Than death can yield me here by my abode.
A husband and a son thou owest to me;
And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance:
The sorrow that I have, by right is yours,
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.

GLOU. The curse my noble father laid on thee,
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper,
And with thy scorns drew'st rivers from his eyes,
And then, to dry them, gavest the duke a clout,
Steep'd in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland, —
His curses, then from bitterness of soul
Denounced against thee, are all fall'n upon thee;
And God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed.

Q. ELIZ. So just is God, to right the innocent.

HAST. O, 't was the foulest deed to slay that babe,
And the most merciless that e'er was heard of!

RIV. Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

DOR. No man but prophesied revenge for it.

BUCK. Northumberland, then present, wept to see it.

Q. MAR. What! were you snarling all before I came,

---

164 *makest*] doest.

175 *When . . . paper*] See for this incident *3 Hen. VI*, I, iv.

181 *plagued*] punished.

Ready to catch each other by the throat,
And turn you all your hatred now on me?
Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven,
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,
Their kingdom's loss, my woful banishment,
Could all but answer for that peevish brat?
Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?
Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!
If not by war, by surfeit die your king,
As ours by murder, to make him a king!
Edward thy son, which now is Prince of Wales,
For Edward my son, which was Prince of Wales,
Die in his youth by like untimely violence!
Thyself a queen, for me that was a queen,
Outlive thy glory, like my wretched self!
Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's loss;
And see another, as I see thee now,
Deck'd in thy rights, as thou art stall'd in mine!
Long die thy happy days before thy death;
And, after many lengthen'd hours of grief,
Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!
Rivers and Dorset, you were standers by,
And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son
Was stabb'd with bloody daggers: God, I pray him,
That none of you may live your natural age,
But by some unlook'd accident cut off!

GLOU. Have done thy charm, thou hateful withered hag!

Q. MAR. And leave out thee? stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.

If heaven have any grievous plague in store
Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,
O, let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,
And then hurl down their indignation
On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace!
The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be whilst some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!
Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity
The slave of nature and the son of hell!
Thou slander of thy mother's heavy womb
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins!
Thou rag of honour! thou detested —

GLOU. Margaret.

Q. MAR. Richard!

GLOU. Ha!

Q. MAR. I call thee not.

GLOU. I cry thee mercy then, for I had thought
That thou hadst call'd me all these bitter names.

Q. MAR. Why, so I did; but look'd for no reply.
O, let me make the period to my curse!

GLOU. 'T is done by me, and ends in "Margaret."

219 *them*] heaven; cf. line 217. The word has a collective or plural significance.

228 *elvish-mark'd*] the common superstition that persons born with scars or deformities had been marked by wicked fairies or elves.
hog] an allusion to Richard's cognizance of a boar.

Q. ELIZ. Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

Q. MAR. Poor painted queen, vain flourish of my fortune!
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider,
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?
Fool, fool! thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.
The time will come that thou shalt wish for me
To help thee curse that poisonous bunch-back'd toad.

HAST. False-boding woman, end thy frantic curse,
Lest to thy harm thou move our patience.

Q. MAR. Foul shame upon you! you have all moved mine.

RIV. Were you well served, you would be taught your duty.

Q. MAR. To serve me well, you all should do me duty,
Teach me to be your queen, and you my subjects:
O, serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty!

DOR. Dispute not with her; she is lunatic.

Q. MAR. Peace, master marquess, you are malapert:
Your fire-new stamp of honour is scarce current.
O, that your young nobility could judge
What 't were to lose it, and be miserable!
They that stand high have many blasts to shake them;
And if they fall, they dash themselves to pieces.

242 *bottled spider*] an exceptionally large or bottle-shaped spider. Cf. "blue-*bottle* fly."

256 *fire-new*] brand-new.

GLOU. Good counsel, marry: learn it, learn it, marquess.

DOR. It toucheth you, my lord, as much as me.

GLOU. Yea, and much more: but I was born so high,
Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind and scorns the sun.

Q. MAR. And turns the sun to shade; alas! alas!
Witness my son, now in the shade of death;
Whose bright out-shining beams thy cloudy wrath
Hath in eternal darkness folded up.
Your aery buildeth in our aery's nest.
O God, that seest it, do not suffer it;
As it was won with blood, lost be it so!

BUCK. Have done! for shame, if not for charity.

Q. MAR. Urge neither charity nor shame to me:
Uncharitably with me have you dealt,
And shamefully by you my hopes are butcher'd.
My charity is outrage, life my shame;
And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage!

BUCK. Have done, have done.

Q. MAR. O princely Buckingham, I'll kiss thy hand,
In sign of league and amity with thee:

---

264 *aery*] eyry, the brood of the eagle or hawk. Eagles are credited with building nests on the tops of cedars. Cf. Marlowe's *Edward II*, II, ii, 16–17: "A lofty *cedar tree*, fair flourishing, On *whose top-branches kingly eagles perch*," and *3 Hen. VI*, V, ii, 11, 12.

266–267 *sun . . . son*] This is a very favourite pun of Shakespeare. Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, II, i, 40–41, and *K. John*, II, i, 499–500: "being but a shadow of your *son*, Becomes a *sun* and makes your *son* a shadow."

277 *My charity . . . shame*] All the charity shown me is outrage; all the life permitted me is my experience of shame.

Now fair befall thee and thy noble house!
Thy garments are not spotted with our blood,
Nor thou within the compass of my curse.
BUCK. Nor no one here; for curses never pass
The lips of those that breathe them in the air.
Q. MAR. I'll not believe but they ascend the sky,
And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace.
O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!
Look, when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,
His venom tooth will rankle to the death:
Have not to do with him, beware of him;
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,
And all their ministers attend on him.
GLOU. What doth she say, my Lord of Buckingham?
BUCK. Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.
Q. MAR. What, dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel?
And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?
O, but remember this another day,
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,
And say poor Margaret was a prophetess.
Live each of you the subjects to his hate,
And he to yours, and all of you to God's! [*Exit.*
HAST. My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses.
RIV. And so doth mine: I muse why she's at liberty.
GLOU. I cannot blame her: by God's holy mother,

---

282 *fair befall thee*] good fortune attend you! Cf. III, v, 47, *infra.*

291 *venom*] venomous. For the use of the noun as adjective cf. *Com. of Errors*, V, i, 69, "*venom* clamours," and *3 Hen. VI*, II, ii, 138, "*venom* toads." The usage is common.

She hath had too much wrong; and I repent
My part thereof that I have done to her.
Q. Eliz. I never did her any, to my knowledge.
Glou. But you have all the vantage of her wrong.
I was too hot to do somebody good,
That is too cold in thinking of it now.
Marry, as for Clarence, he is well repaid;
He is frank'd up to fatting for his pains:
God pardon them that are the cause of it!
Riv. A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,
To pray for them that have done scathe to us.
Glou. So do I ever: [*Aside*] being well advised:
For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself.

Enter Catesby

Cates. Madam, his majesty doth call for you;
And for your grace; and you, my noble lords.
Q. Eliz. Catesby, we come. Lords, will you go with us?
Riv. Madam, we will attend your grace.
[*Exeunt all but Gloucester.*
Glou. I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
The secret mischiefs that I set abroach
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.

314 *frank'd up*] cooped up as in a pen or sty, which was commonly called a "frank." Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, II, ii, 140: "doth the old boar feed in the old *frank?*" The verb is used of animals, especially hogs, being fattened for the butcher. Shakespeare only employs it once again, also in this play: IV, v, 3, *infra.*

317 *scathe*] injury, hurt. Cf. "scatheless."

Clarence, whom I, indeed, have laid in darkness,
I do beweep to many simple gulls;
Namely, to Hastings, Derby, Buckingham;
And say it is the queen and her allies
That stir the king against the duke my brother.
Now, they believe it; and withal whet me
To be revenged on Rivers, Vaughan, Grey:
But then I sigh; and, with a piece of Scripture,
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
And thus I clothe my naked villany
With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.

Enter two Murderers

But, soft! here come my executioners.
How now, my hardy stout resolved mates!
Are you now going to dispatch this deed?

FIRST MURD. We are, my lord; and come to have the warrant,
That we may be admitted where he is.

GLOU. Well thought upon; I have it here about me.
[*Gives the warrant.*
When you have done, repair to Crosby Place.
But, sirs, be sudden in the execution,
Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead;
For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps
May move your hearts to pity, if you mark him.

---

337 *old odd ends*] quoted tags, odds and ends. Cf. *Much Ado*, I, i, 250: "ere you flout *old ends*."

340 *resolved*] resolute.

FIRST MURD. Tush!
Fear not, my lord, we will not stand to prate;
Talkers are no good doers: be assured
We come to use our hands and not our tongues.
GLOU. Your eyes drop millstones, when fools' eyes drop tears.
I like you, lads: about your business straight.
Go, go, dispatch.
FIRST MURD. We will, my noble lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — LONDON

THE TOWER

Enter CLARENCE *and* BRAKENBURY

BRAK. Why looks your grace so heavily to-day?
CLAR. O, I have pass'd a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 't were to buy a world of happy days,
So full of dismal terror was the time!

---

354 *Your eyes drop millstones*] An expression very commonly applied to hard-natured persons who were not in the habit of weeping at all. Cf. I, iv, 236–237, *infra:* "he will weep. Ay, *millstones*." The words were similarly applied to tears coming after unfeeling laughter in *Troil. and Cress.*, I, ii, 137–138: "Queen Hecuba laughed, that her eyes ran o'er With *millstones*."

4 *faithful*] here the antithesis to "infidel."

BRAK. What was your dream? I long to hear you tell it.

CLAR. Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester;
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk
Upon the hatches: thence we look'd toward England,
And cited up a thousand fearful times,
During the wars of York and Lancaster,
That had befall'n us. As we paced along
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,
Methought that Gloucester stumbled; and, in falling,
Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard,
Into the tumbling billows of the main.
Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea:
Some lay in dead men's skulls; and in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,
As 't were in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,

14 *fearful*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *heavy*, *i. e.*, sad, dismal.

26 *anchors*] Thus all the original editions. *Ingots* is a popular emendation. No change is essential.

27 *unvalued*] invaluable. For this use of the passive participle, see note on *Merch. of Ven.*, III, iv, 52: "with *imagined* speed."

Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scattered by.
BRAK. Had you such leisure in the time of death
To gaze upon the secrets of the deep?
CLAR. Methought I had; and often did I strive
To yield the ghost: but still the envious flood
Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth
To seek the empty, vast and wandering air;
But smothered it within my panting bulk,
Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.
BRAK. Awaked you not with this sore agony?
CLAR. O no, my dream was lengthened after life;
O, then began the tempest to my soul,
Who pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood,
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.
The first that there did greet my stranger soul,
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick;
Who cried aloud, "What scourge for perjury
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?"
And so he vanish'd: then came wandering by
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
Dabbled in blood; and he squeak'd out aloud,

32 *woo'd*] ogled.

37 *envious*] cruel, malicious.

40 *bulk*] body, frame, trunk. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, i, 95: "to shatter all his *bulk*."

45–47 *Who pass'd . . . poets write of*] Virgil, *Æneid*, VI, 295 *seq.*, is the *locus classicus* for the myth of Charon, the Stygian ferryman. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, III, ii, 8–10: "I stalk about her door, Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon."

"Clarence is come; false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewksbury:
Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!"
With that, methoughts, a legion of foul fiends
Environ'd me about, and howled in mine ears
Such hideous cries, that with the very noise
I trembling waked, and for a season after
Could not believe but that I was in hell,
Such terrible impression made the dream.

BRAK. No marvel, my lord, though it affrighted you;
I promise you, I am afraid to hear you tell it.

CLAR. O Brackenbury, I have done those things,
Which now bear evidence against my soul,
For Edward's sake; and see how he requites me!
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,
But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds,
Yet execute thy wrath in me alone;
O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!
I pray thee, gentle keeper, stay by me;
My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

BRAK. I will, my lord: God give your grace good rest! [*Clarence sleeps.*

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning and the noon-tide night.
Princes have but their titles for their glories,

55 *fleeting*] wavering, inconstant. Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, V, ii, 240: "the *fleeting* moon."

72 *guiltless wife*] An historical error. Clarence's wife, Isabella Neville, the elder daughter of the Earl of Warwick, died December 21, 1476, long before Clarence's imprisonment.

An outward honour for an inward toil;
And, for unfelt imagination,
They often feel a world of restless cares:
So that, betwixt their titles and low names,
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

Enter the two Murderers

FIRST MURD. Ho! who's here?

BRAK. In God's name what are you, and how came you hither?

FIRST MURD. I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

BRAK. Yea, are you so brief?

SEC. MURD. O sir, it is better to be brief than tedious.
Show him our commission; talk no more.

[*Brakenbury reads it.*

BRAK. I am in this commanded to deliver
The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands:
I will not reason what is meant hereby,
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.
Here are the keys, there sits the duke asleep:
I'll to the king; and signify to him
That thus I have resign'd my charge to you.

FIRST MURD. Do so, it is a point of wisdom: fare you well. [*Exit Brakenbury.*

80–81 *for unfelt imagination . . . cares*] in return for imaginary gratification, which does not touch their feeling, they often feel any amount of disturbing cares. For *imagination*, the reading of the early Quartos, the Folios substitute *Imaginations*.

SEC. MURD. What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

FIRST MURD. No; then he will say 't was done cowardly, when he wakes.

SEC. MURD. When he wakes! why, fool, he shall never wake till the judgement-day.

FIRST MURD. Why, then he will say we stabbed him sleeping.

SEC. MURD. The urging of that word "judgement" hath bred a kind of remorse in me.

FIRST MURD. What, art thou afraid?

SEC. MURD. Not to kill him, having a warrant for it; but to be damned for killing him, from which no warrant can defend us.

FIRST MURD. I thought thou hadst been resolute.

SEC. MURD. So I am, to let him live.

FIRST MURD. Back to the Duke of Gloucester, tell him so.

SEC. MURD. I pray thee, stay a while: I hope my holy humour will change; 't was wont to hold me but while one would tell twenty.

FIRST MURD. How dost thou feel thyself now?

SEC. MURD. Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

FIRST MURD. Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

SEC. MURD. 'Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.

FIRST MURD. Where is thy conscience now?

SEC. MURD. In the Duke of Gloucester's purse.

First Murd. So when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

Sec. Murd. Let it go; there's few or none will entertain it.

First Murd. How if it come to thee again?

Sec. Murd. I'll not meddle with it: it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it checks him; he cannot lie with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him: it is a blushing shamefast spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold, that I found; it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turned out of all towns and cites for a dangerous thing; and every man that means to live well endeavours to trust to himself and to live without it.

First Murd. 'Zounds, it is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the duke.

Sec. Murd. Take the devil in thy mind, and believe him not: he would insinuate with thee but to make thee sigh.

First Murd. Tut, I am strong-framed, he cannot prevail with me, I warrant thee.

Sec. Murd. Spoke like a tall fellow that respects his reputation. Come, shall we to this gear?

---

145 *him*] thy conscience.

146 *insinuate with thee*] beguile thee.

149 *tall*] bold, daring; a common usage.

150 *to this gear*] to this business. Thus the Quartos; the Folios read *fall to worke.*

FIRST MURD. Take him over the costard with the hilts of thy sword, and then we will chop him in the malmsey-butt in the next room.

SEC. MURD. O excellent device! make a sop of him.

FIRST MURD. Hark! he stirs: shall I strike?

SEC. MURD. No, first let's reason with him.

CLAR. Where art thou, keeper? give me a cup of wine.

SEC. MURD. You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

CLAR. In God's name, what art thou?

SEC. MURD. A man, as you are.

CLAR. But not, as I am, royal.

SEC. MURD. Nor you, as we are, loyal.

CLAR. Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

SEC. MURD. My voice is now the king's, my looks mine own.

CLAR. How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!
Your eyes do menace me: why look you pale?
Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

BOTH. To, to, to —

CLAR. To murder me?

BOTH. Ay, ay.

CLAR. You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,
And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.
Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

151 *Take him over the costard*] Hit him over the head.

152 *chop*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *throw*. "Chop" has much the meaning of "clap" or "hurry up"; it implies very rapid movement.

FIRST MURD. Offended us you have not, but the king.

CLAR. I shall be reconciled to him again.

SEC. MURD. Never, my lord; therefore prepare to die.

CLAR. Are you call'd forth from out a world of men
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?
Where are the evidence that do accuse me?
What lawful quest have given their verdict up
Unto the frowning judge? or who pronounced
The bitter sentence of poor Clarence' death?
Before I be convict by course of law,
To threaten me with death is most unlawful.
I charge you, as you hope to have redemption
By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins,
That you depart and lay no hands on me:
The deed you undertake is damnable.

FIRST MURD. What we will do, we do upon command.

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180 *quest*] inquest or trial by jury; an empanelled jury. Cf. *Sonnet* xlvi, 9–10: "To 'cide this title is impanneled A *quest* of thoughts."

181–183 *who . . . law*] As a matter of history Clarence had been formally accused by his brother, King Edward IV, of treasonable offences in the Parliament of January, 1478, which thereupon duly passed bills of attainder through both houses. Immediately afterwards (February 8), a court of chivalry presided over by the Duke of Buckingham passed sentence of death, which was privately carried out in the Tower some ten days later. There is no trustworthy historical foundation for associating Richard, Duke of Gloucester, with Clarence's end. The sixteenth century chroniclers report the rumour that he was drowned in a butt of malmsey. The story has no official confirmation, but it may be true.

SEC. MURD. And he that hath commanded is the king.

CLAR. Erroneous vassal! the great King of kings
Hath in the tables of his law commanded
That thou shalt do no murder: and wilt thou then
Spurn at his edict, and fulfil a man's?
Take heed; for he holds vengeance in his hands,
To hurl upon their heads that break his law.

SEC. MURD. And that same vengeance doth he hurl on thee,
For false forswearing, and for murder too:
Thou didst receive the holy sacrament,
To fight in quarrel of the house of Lancaster.

FIRST MURD. And, like a traitor to the name of God,
Didst break that vow; and with thy treacherous blade
Unrip'dst the bowels of thy sovereign's son.

SEC. MURD. Whom thou wert sworn to cherish and defend.

FIRST MURD. How canst thou urge God's dreadful law to us,
When thou hast broke it in so dear degree?

CLAR. Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?
For Edward, for my brother, for his sake:
Why, sirs,
He sends ye not to murder me for this;
For in this sin he is as deep as I.
If God will be revenged for this deed,
O, know you yet, he doth it publicly:

Take not the quarrel from his powerful arm;
He needs no indirect nor lawless course
To cut off those that have offended him.
FIRST MURD. Who made thee then a bloody minister,
When gallant-springing brave Plantagenet,
That princely novice, was struck dead by thee?
CLAR. My brother's love, the devil, and my rage.
FIRST MURD. Thy brother's love, our duty, and thy fault,
Provoke us hither now to slaughter thee.
CLAR. Oh, if you love my brother, hate not me;
I am his brother, and I love him well.
If you be hired for meed, go back again,
And I will send you to my brother Gloucester,
Who shall reward you better for my life,
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.
SEC. MURD. You are deceived, your brother Gloucester hates you.
CLAR. O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear:
Go you to him from me.
BOTH. Ay, so we will.
CLAR. Tell him, when that our princely father York
Bless'd his three sons with his victorious arm,
And charged us from his soul to love each other,
He little thought of this divided friendship:
Bid Gloucester think of this, and he will weep.

---

218 *gallant-springing*] like a gallant in the spring of life. Pope hyphened these words, which are separate in the original editions.

FIRST MURD. Ay, millstones; as he lesson'd us to weep.
CLAR. O, do not slander him, for he is kind.
FIRST MURD. Right,
As snow in harvest. Thou deceivest thyself:
'T is he that sent us hither now to slaughter thee.
CLAR. It cannot be; for when I parted with him,
He hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,
That he would labour my delivery.
SEC. MURD. Why, so he doth, now he delivers thee
From this world's thraldom to the joys of heaven.
FIRST MURD. Make peace with God, for you must die, my lord.
CLAR. Hast thou that holy feeling in thy soul,
To counsel me to make my peace with God,
And art thou yet to thy own soul so blind,
That thou wilt war with God by murdering me?
Ah, sirs, consider, he that set you on
To do this deed will hate you for the deed.
SEC. MURD. What shall we do?
CLAR. Relent, and save your souls.
FIRST MURD. Relent! 't is cowardly and womanish.
CLAR. Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,

---

237 *Ay, millstones*] See note on I, iii, 354, *supra:* "Your eyes drop *millstones.*"

257–260 *Which of you . . . life?*] In the Folio text, these four lines, together with the line here separated from them and numbered

Being pent from liberty, as I am now,
If two such murderers as yourselves came to you,
Would not entreat for life?
My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks;
O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,
Come thou on my side, and entreat for me,
As you would beg, were you in my distress:
A begging prince what beggar pities not?

SEC. MURD. Look behind you, my lord.

FIRST MURD. Take that, and that: if all this will not do, [*Stabs him.*
I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within.
[*Exit, with the body.*

SEC. MURD. A bloody deed, and desperately dispatch'd!
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands
Of this most grievous guilty murder done!

Re-enter First Murderer

FIRST MURD. How now! what mean'st thou, that thou help'st me not?
By heavens, the duke shall know how slack thou art!

SEC. MURD. I would he knew that I had saved his brother!

264, "As you would beg . . . distress" (which immediately follows them in the Folio), form part of Clarence's preceding speech, "Relent, and save your souls" (l. 254). All the five lines are omitted from the Quartos. They seem well worthy of retention, and the transposition (which the Cambridge editors adopt) removes any impression of abruptness.

Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say;
For I repent me that the duke is slain. [*Exit.*

FIRST MURD. So do not I: go, coward as thou art.
Now must I hide his body in some hole,
Until the duke take order for his burial:
And when I have my meed, I must away;
For this will out, and here I must not stay. [*Exit.*

ACT SECOND — SCENE I — LONDON

THE PALACE

Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD *sick*, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, GREY, *and others*

KING EDWARD

WHY, SO: NOW HAVE I
done a good day's work:
You peers, continue this united league:
I every day expect an embassage
From my Redeemer to redeem me hence;
And now in peace my soul shall part to heaven,
Since I have set my friends at peace on earth.
Rivers and Hastings, take each other's hand;
Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love.

RIV. By heaven, my soul is purged from grudging hate;
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.

5 *part*] depart; like the French "partir."

HAST. So thrive I, as I truly swear the like!
K. EDW. Take heed you dally not before your king;
Lest he that is the supreme King of kings
Confound your hidden falsehood, and award
Either of you to be the other's end.
HAST. So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!
RIV. And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!
K. EDW. Madam, yourself are not exempt in this,
Nor your son Dorset; Buckingham, nor you;
You have been factious one against the other.
Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;
And what you do, do it unfeignedly.
Q. ELIZ. Here, Hastings; I will never more remember
Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!
K. EDW. Dorset, embrace him; Hastings, love lord marquess.
DOR. This interchange of love, I here protest,
Upon my part shall be unviolable.
HAST. And so swear I, my lord. [*They embrace.*
K. EDW. Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league
With thy embracements to my wife's allies,
And make me happy in your unity.
BUCK. [*To the Queen*] Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate

8 *Dissemble not . . . love*] Do not merely conceal your hatred, do not merely pretend to abandon your hatred; swear love to one another in sincerity.

On you or yours, but with all duteous love
Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me
With hate in those where I expect most love!
When I have most need to employ a friend,
And most assured that he is a friend,
Deep, hollow, treacherous and full of guile,
Be he unto me! this do I beg of God,
When I am cold in zeal to you or yours. [*They embrace.*

K. Edw. A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,
Is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here,
To make the perfect period of this peace.

Buck. And, in good time, here comes the noble duke.

Enter Gloucester

Glou. Good morrow to my sovereign king and queen;
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

K. Edw. Happy indeed, as we have spent the day.
Brother, we have done deeds of charity;

33–34 *but . . . Doth*] and doth not.

45 *the noble duke*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Sir Richard Ratcliffe, and the Duke*, and in the succeeding stage direction the Folios substitute *Enter Ratcliffe and Gloster* for the Quarto reading *Enter Gloucester*. The insertion in the Folio of Ratcliffe's name seems to have been deliberate, though no speech is assigned to him in this scene. Ratcliffe, who is one of Richard's supporters, plays a small but useful part in Act III, Sc. iii, Act IV, Sc. iv, and Act V, Sc. iii, *infra*.

Made peace of enmity, fair love of hate,
Between these swelling wrong-incensed peers.
GLOU. A blessed labour, my most sovereign liege:
Amongst this princely heap, if any here,
By false intelligence, or wrong surmise,
Hold me a foe;
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,
Have aught committed that is hardly borne
By any in this presence, I desire
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:
'T is death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.
First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,
Which I will purchase with my duteous service;
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,
If ever any grudge were lodged between us;
Of you, Lord Rivers, and, Lord Grey, of you,
That all without desert have frown'd on me;
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen; indeed, of all.
I do not know that Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds,
More than the infant that is born to-night:
I thank my God for my humility.
Q. ELIZ. A holy day shall this be kept hereafter:
I would to God all strifes were well compounded.
My sovereign liege, I do beseech your majesty
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.
GLOU. Why, madam, have I offer'd love for this
To be so flouted in this royal presence?

53 *heap*] throng, company.

Who knows not that the noble duke is dead?

[*They all start.*

You do him injury to scorn his corse.

RIV. Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

Q. ELIZ. All-seeing heaven, what a world is this!

BUCK. Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

DOR. Ay, my good lord; and no one in this presence
But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

K. EDW. Is Clarence dead? the order was reversed.

GLOU. But he, poor soul, by your first order died,
And that a winged Mercury did bear;
Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,
That came too lag to see him buried.
God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,
Nearer in bloody thoughts, but not in blood,
Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,
And yet go current from suspicion!

Enter DERBY

DER. A boon, my sovereign, for my service done!

K. EDW. I pray thee, peace: my soul is full of sorrow.

DER. I will not rise, unless your highness grant.

K. EDW. Then speak at once what is it thou demand'st.

DER. The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life;
Who slew to-day a riotous gentleman
Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

K. EDW. Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death,

99 *forfeit*] remission of the forfeit, surrender.

And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave?
My brother slew no man; his fault was thought,
And yet his punishment was cruel death.
Who sued to me for him? who, in my rage,
Kneel'd at my feet and bade me be advised?
Who spake of brotherhood? who spake of love?
Who told me how the poor soul did forsake
The mighty Warwick, and did fight for me?
Who told me, in the field by Tewksbury,
When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,
And said "Dear brother, live, and be a king"?
Who told me, when we both lay in the field
Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me
Even in his own garments, and gave himself,
All thin and naked, to the numb cold night?
All this from my remembrance brutish wrath
Sinfully pluck'd, and not a man of you
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.
But when your carters or your waiting-vassals
Have done a drunken slaughter, and defaced
The precious image of our dear Redeemer,
You straight are on your knees for pardon, pardon;
And I, unjustly too, must grant it you:
But for my brother not a man would speak,
Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself
For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all
Have been beholding to him in his life;
Yet none of you would once plead for his life.
O God, I fear thy justice will take hold

107 *be advised*] be considerate (of my course of action).

On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!
Come, Hastings, help me to my closet. Oh, poor
Clarence! [*Exeunt some with King and Queen.*
GLOU. This is the fruit of rashness. Mark'd you
not
How that the guilty kindred of the queen
Look'd pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?
O, they did urge it still unto the king!
God will revenge it. But come, let us in,
To comfort Edward with our company.
BUCK. We wait upon your grace. [*Exeunt.* 140

SCENE II — THE PALACE

Enter the DUCHESS OF YORK, *with the two children of* CLARENCE

BOY. Tell me, good grandam, is our father dead?
DUCH. No, boy.
BOY. Why do you wring your hands, and beat your
breast,
And cry "O Clarence, my unhappy son"?

1 *good grandam*] the widow of Richard, Duke of York, who was slain at the battle of Wakefield, 1460, and the mother of Edward IV, Richard III, and Clarence. She survived her husband thirty-five years. Her grandchildren, Clarence's son and daughter, with whom she converses in this scene, were respectively Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, who was executed by Henry VII on November 21, 1499, and the famous Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, mother of Cardinal Pole; the Countess was beheaded on Tower Hill at Henry VIII's instance on May 27, 1541; cf. IV, iv, 37, *infra*.

GIRL. Why do you look on us, and shake your head,
And call us wretches, orphans, castaways,
If that our noble father be alive?
DUCH. My pretty cousins, you mistake me much.
I do lament the sickness of the king,
As loath to lose him; not your father's death;
It were lost sorrow to wail one that's lost.
BOY. Then, grandam, you conclude that he is dead.
The king my uncle is to blame for this:
God will revenge it; whom I will importune
With daily prayers all to that effect.
GIRL. And so will I.
DUCH. Peace, children, peace! the king doth love you well:
Incapable and shallow innocents,
You cannot guess who caused your father's death.
BOY. Grandam, we can; for my good uncle Gloucester
Told me, the king, provoked by the queen,
Devised impeachments to imprison him:
And when my uncle told me so, he wept,
And hugg'd me in his arm, and kindly kiss'd my cheek;
Bade me rely on him as on my father,
And he would love me dearly as his child.
DUCH. Oh, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,

8 *cousins*] this word was used for kinsfolk of any degree; here it stands for "grandchildren."
18 *Incapable*] *sc.* of understanding, ignorant.

And with a virtuous vizard hide foul guile!
He is my son; yea, and therein my shame;
Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit.
BOY. Think you my uncle did dissemble, grandam?
DUCH. Ay, boy.
BOY. I cannot think it. Hark! what noise is this?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, *with her hair about her ears;* RIVERS *and* DORSET *after her*

Q. ELIZ. Oh, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune and torment myself?
I'll join with black despair against my soul,
And to myself become an enemy.
DUCH. What means this scene of rude impatience?
Q. ELIZ. To make an act of tragic violence:
Edward, my lord, your son, our king, is dead.
Why grow the branches now the root is wither'd?
Why wither not the leaves the sap being gone?
If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king's,
Or, like obedient subjects, follow him
To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.
DUCH. Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow
As I had title in thy noble husband!

39 *an act*] "Act" has a theatrical significance. It naturally follows the "scene" of the previous line. Cf. *K. John*, II, i, 376: "industrious *scenes and acts* of death."

46 *perpetual rest*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *nere-changing night.*

I have bewept a worthy husband's death,
And lived by looking on his images:
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance
Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death,
And I for comfort have but one false glass,
Which grieves me when I see my shame in him.
Thou art a widow; yet thou art a mother,
And hast the comfort of thy children left thee:
But death hath snatch'd my husband from mine arms,
And pluck'd two crutches from my feeble limbs,
Edward and Clarence. O, what cause have I,
Thine being but a moiety of my grief,
To overgo thy plaints and drown thy cries!

BOY. Good aunt, you wept not for our father's death,
How can we aid you with our kindred tears?

GIRL. Our fatherless distress was left unmoan'd;
Your widow-dolour likewise be unwept!

Q. ELIZ. Give me no help in lamentation;
I am not barren to bring forth complaints:
All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes,
That I, being govern'd by the watery moon,
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world!
Oh for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

50 *his images*] the children who preserve his likeness.

61 *overgo thy plaints*] exceed thy lamentations. The Folios substitute *woes* for *plaints*, the reading of the Quartos.

68 *reduce*] bring, lead back, as in the Latin word "reducere." Cf. V, v, 36, *infra:* "*reduce* there bloody days."

69 *watery moon*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 103, "the *moon*, the governess of *floods*," and *1 Hen. IV*, I, ii, 36: "being governed, as the *sea* is, by . . . the *moon*."

CHIL. Oh for our father, for our dear lord Clarence!
DUCH. Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!
Q. ELIZ. What stay had I but Edward? and he's gone.
CHIL. What stay had we but Clarence? and he's gone.
DUCH. What stays had I but they? and they are gone.
Q. ELIZ. Was never widow had so dear a loss.
CHIL. Were never orphans had so dear a loss.
DUCH. Was never mother had so dear a loss.
Alas, I am the mother of these moans!
Their woes are parcell'd, mine are general.
She for an Edward weeps, and so do I;
I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she:
These babes for Clarence weep, and so do I;
I for an Edward weep, so do not they:
Alas, you three, on me threefold distress'd
Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,
And I will pamper it with lamentations.
DOR. Comfort, dear mother: God is much displeased
That you take with unthankfulness his doing:
In common worldly things, 't is call'd ungrateful,
With dull unwillingness to repay a debt

78 *so dear*] so extreme. Both "dear" and "dearest" are commonly used by Shakespeare as epithets of intensity.

81 *Their woes . . . general*] Their woes are divided up amongst them; each has his own particular woe; my woes cover all theirs.

89–100 *Comfort . . . throne*] The whole of this speech of Dorset appears first in the Folios. It is omitted from the Quartos.

Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;
Much more to be thus opposite with heaven,
For it requires the royal debt it lent you.

RIV. Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him;
Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives:
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,
And plant your joys in living Edward's throne.

Enter GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, *and* RATCLIFF

GLOU. Madam, have comfort: all of us have cause
To wail the dimming of our shining star;
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.
Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;
I did not see your grace: humbly on my knee
I crave your blessing.

DUCH. God bless thee, and put meekness in thy mind,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

GLOU. [*Aside*] Amen; and make me die a good old man!
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing:
I marvel why her grace did leave it out.

BUCK. You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing peers,
That bear this mutual heavy load of moan,

94 *opposite with*] opposed to, at odds with.
95 *For*] Because.
112 *cloudy*] sullen.

Now cheer each other in each other's love:
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,
We are to reap the harvest of his son.
The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts,
But lately splinter'd, knit and join'd together,
Must gently be preserved, cherish'd, and kept:
Me seemeth good, that, with some little train,
Forthwith from Ludlow the young prince be fetch'd
Hither to London, to be crown'd our king.

RIV. Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

BUCK. Marry, my lord, lest, by a multitude,
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out;
Which would be so much the more dangerous,
By how much the estate is green and yet ungovern'd:
Where every horse bears his commanding rein,
And may direct his course as please himself,
As well the fear of harm as harm apparent,
In my opinion, ought to be prevented.

GLOU. I hope the king made peace with all of us;
And the compact is firm and true in me.

117–119 *The broken . . . kept*] The meaning of the passage is clear, though confusedly expressed. The "broken rancour" must mean the rancour that has been broken and destroyed, the cessation of rancour, the reconciliation. Cf. "The new-heal'd wound of malice" in line 125. "Splinter'd" means "joined together with splints." Cf. *Othello*, II, iii, 312: "this *broken* joint between you and her husband entreat her to *splinter*."

123–140 *Why . . . say I*] This passage appears only in the Folios.

127 *the estate*] the state.

130 *apparent*] manifest.

RIV. And so in me; and so, I think, in all:
Yet, since it is but green, it should be put
To no apparent likelihood of breach,
Which haply by much company might be urged:
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham,
That it is meet so few should fetch the prince.
HAST. And so say I.
GLOU. Then be it so; and go we to determine
Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.
Madam, and you, my mother, will you go
To give your censures in this weighty business?
Q. ELIZ. } With all our hearts.
DUCH. }
[*Exeunt all but Buckingham and Gloucester.*
BUCK. My lord, whoever journeys to the prince,
For God's sake, let not us two stay behind;
For, by the way, I'll sort occasion,
As index to the story we late talk'd of,
To part the queen's proud kindred from the king.
GLOU. My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet! — My dear cousin,
I, like a child, will go by thy direction.
Towards Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.
[*Exeunt.*

---

142 *Ludlow*] As Prince of Wales, the young prince, according to established custom, resided at Ludlow Castle on the Welsh border.

144 *censures*] opinions.

149 *index*] prelude, prologue. In early printed books, the index was placed in the preliminary pages. Cf. IV, iv, 85, *infra*: "The flattering *index* of a direful pageant," and *Othello*, II, i, 252: "an *index and obscure prologue* to the history of lust."

SCENE III — LONDON

A STREET

Enter two Citizens, *meeting*

FIRST CIT. Neighbour, well met: whither away so fast?

SEC. CIT. I promise you, I scarcely know myself:
Hear you the news abroad?

FIRST CIT. Ay, that the king is dead.

SEC. CIT. Bad news, by 'r lady, seldom comes the better:
I fear, I fear, 't will prove a troublous world.

Enter another Citizen

THIRD CIT. Neighbours, God speed!

FIRST CIT. Give you good morrow, sir.

THIRD CIT. Doth this news hold of good King Edward's death?

SEC. CIT. Ay, sir, it is too true; God help the while!

THIRD CIT. Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

FIRST CIT. No, no; by God's good grace his son shall reign.

THIRD CIT. Woe to that land that's govern'd by a child!

SEC. CIT. In him there is a hope of government,
That in his nonage council under him,

---

11 *Woe . . . child*] Cf. *Ecclesiastes*, x, 16: "O *woe to* thee, O *land*, when thy king is *a child!*"

And in his full and ripen'd years himself,
No doubt, shall then and till then govern well.
FIRST CIT. So stood the state when Henry the Sixth
Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.
THIRD CIT. Stood the state so? No, no, good friends, God wot;
For then this land was famously enrich'd
With politic grave counsel; then the king
Had virtuous uncles to protect his grace.
FIRST CIT. Why, so hath this, both by the father and mother.
THIRD CIT. Better it were they all came by the father,
Or by the father there were none at all;
For emulation now, who shall be nearest,
Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.
O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester!
And the queen's sons and brothers haught and proud:
And were they to be ruled, and not to rule,
This sickly land might solace as before.
FIRST CIT. Come, come, we fear the worst; all shall be well.
THIRD CIT. When clouds appear, wise men put on their cloaks;
When great leaves fall, the winter is at hand;
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?
Untimely storms make men expect a dearth.

---

26 *touch . . . near*] injure, hurt, hit. Cf. II, iv, 25, *infra*.
28 *haught*] a common form of "haughty." See *3 Hen. VI*, II, i, 169.
30 *solace*] find comfort, *not* give comfort.

All may be well; but, if God sort it so,
'T is more than we deserve, or I expect.
SEC. CIT. Truly, the souls of men are full of dread:
Ye cannot reason almost with a man
That looks not heavily and full of fear.
THIRD CIT. Before the times of change, still is it so:
By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
Ensuing dangers; as, by proof, we see
The waters swell before a boisterous storm.
But leave it all to God. Whither away?
SEC. CIT. Marry, we were sent for to the justices.
THIRD CIT. And so was I: I'll bear you company.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — LONDON

THE PALACE

Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, *the young* DUKE OF YORK, QUEEN ELIZABETH, *and the* DUCHESS OF YORK

ARCH. Last night, I hear, they lay at Northampton;
At Stony-Stratford will they be to-night:
To-morrow, or next day, they will be here.

---

36 *sort*] ordain. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, V, i, 132: "But God *sort* all."

41–44 *Before . . . storm*] This reflection is taken almost literally from Holinshed's *Chronicle* (III, 721).

1–2 *Last night . . . to-night*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios transpose *Northampton* and *Stony-Stratford*, in a helpless attempt to improve the metre. But the Quarto reading is right, for the Archbishop, who knows of the prince's movements only that he is on his way from Ludlow to London and that he received a hearsay report of his arrival at Northampton, would naturally assume that Stony-

DUCH. I long with all my heart to see the prince:
I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.
Q. ELIZ. But I hear, no; they say my son of York
Hath almost overta'en him in his growth.
YORK. Ay, mother; but I would not have it so.
DUCH. Why, my young cousin, it is good to grow.
YORK. Grandam, one night, as we did sit at supper,
My uncle Rivers talk'd how I did grow
More than my brother: "Ay," quoth my uncle Gloucester,
"Small herbs have grace, great weeds do grow apace:"
And since, methinks, I would not grow so fast,
Because sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.
DUCH. Good faith, good faith, the saying did not hold
In him that did object the same to thee:
He was the wretched'st thing when he was young,
So long a-growing and so leisurely,
That, if this rule were true, he should be gracious.
ARCH. Why, madam, so, no doubt, he is.
DUCH. I hope so too; but yet let mothers doubt.
YORK. Now, by my troth, if I had been remember'd,

Stratford, which was the nearer London, would be the next stopping-place in the journey. The prince as a matter of history rested at Stony-Stratford on his journey London-wards without touching Northampton, and was met at Stony-Stratford by his uncle Gloucester, who removed him, far from his intended route, back to Northampton. But such a circumstance was obviously unknown to the Archbishop.

17 *did object the same to thee*] made the same objection to thy growth.
20 *this rule*] the rule laid down by himself.
23 *if I had been remember'd*] if I had recalled it.

I could have given my uncle's grace a flout,
To touch his growth nearer than he touch'd mine.

DUCH. How, my pretty York? I pray thee, let me hear it.

YORK. Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast
That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old:
'T was full two years ere I could get a tooth.
Grandam, this would have been a biting jest.

DUCH. I pray thee, pretty York, who told thee this?

YORK. Grandam, his nurse.

DUCH. His nurse! why, she was dead ere thou wert born.

YORK. If 't were not she, I cannot tell who told me.

Q. ELIZ. A parlous boy: go to, you are too shrewd.

ARCH. Good madam, be not angry with the child.

Q. ELIZ. Pitchers have ears.

Enter a Messenger

ARCH. Here comes a messenger. What news?

MESS. Such news, my lord, as grieves me to unfold.

Q. ELIZ. How fares the prince?

MESS. Well, madam, and in health.

DUCH. What is thy news then?

MESS. Lord Rivers and Lord Grey are sent to Pomfret,
With them Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners.

---

25 *touch . . . nearer*] hit, in the slang sense of "get at." Cf. II, iii, 26, *supra.*

35 *parlous*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *perilous.* "A parlous boy" means "un enfant terrible." Cf. III, i, 154, *infra.*

DUCH. Who hath committed them?
MESS. The mighty dukes,
Gloucester and Buckingham.
Q. ELIZ. For what offence?
MESS. The sum of all I can, I have disclosed;
Why or for what these nobles were committed
Is all unknown to me, my gracious lady.
Q. ELIZ. Ay me, I see the downfall of our house!
The tiger now hath seized the gentle hind;
Insulting tyranny begins to jet
Upon the innocent and aweless throne:
Welcome, destruction, death, and massacre!
I see, as in a map, the end of all.
DUCH. Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,
How many of you have mine eyes beheld!
My husband lost his life to get the crown;
And often up and down my sons were toss'd,
For me to joy and weep their gain and loss:
And being seated, and domestic broils
Clean over-blown, themselves, the conquerors,
Make war upon themselves; blood against blood,
Self against self: O, preposterous
And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen;
Or let me die, to look on death no more!
Q. ELIZ. Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary.
Madam, farewell.
DUCH. I'll go along with you.

51–52 *to jet . . . throne*] to encroach upon a throne filled by an innocent child, and one inspiring no fear.

66 *sanctuary*] the precincts of Westminster Abbey, where no arrests of suspected persons were permitted.

Q. Eliz. You have no cause.
Arch. My gracious lady, go;
And thither bear your treasure and your goods.
For my part, I'll resign unto your grace
The seal I keep: and so betide to me
As well I tender you and all of yours!
Come, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THIRD — SCENE I — LONDON

A STREET

The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE, *the Dukes of* GLOUCESTER *and* BUCKINGHAM, CARDINAL BOURCHIER, CATESBY, *and others*

BUCKINGHAM

WELCOME, SWEET PRINCE, to London, to your chamber.

GLOU. Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign:
The weary way hath made you melancholy.

PRINCE. No, uncle; but our crosses on the way
Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy:
I want more uncles here to welcome me.

GLOU. Sweet prince, the untainted virtue of your years
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit:
Nor more can you distinguish of a man

1 *chamber*] London, the capital city of the kingdom, was formally called "camera regis."

Than of his outward show; which, God he knows,
Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.
Those uncles which you want were dangerous;
Your grace attended to their sugar'd words,
But look'd not on the poison of their hearts:
God keep you from them, and from such false friends!

PRINCE. God keep me from false friends! but they were none.

GLOU. My lord, the mayor of London comes to greet you.

Enter the Lord Mayor, *and his train*

MAY. God bless your grace with health and happy days!

PRINCE. I thank you, good my lord; and thank you all.
I thought my mother and my brother York
Would long ere this have met us on the way:
Fie, what a slug is Hastings, that he comes not
To tell us whether they will come or no!

Enter LORD HASTINGS

BUCK. And, in good time here comes the sweating lord.

PRINCE. Welcome, my lord: what, will our mother come?

HAST. On what occasion, God he knows, not I,
The queen your mother and your brother York
Have taken sanctuary: the tender prince

22 *slug*] sluggard.

Would fain have come with me to meet your grace,
But by his mother was perforce withheld.
BUCK. Fie, what an indirect and peevish course
Is this of hers! Lord cardinal, will your grace
Persuade the queen to send the Duke of York
Unto his princely brother presently?
If she deny, Lord Hastings, go with him,
And from her jealous arms pluck him perforce.
CARD. My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory
Can from his mother win the Duke of York,
Anon expect him here; but if she be obdurate
To mild entreaties, God in heaven forbid
We should infringe the holy privilege
Of blessed sanctuary! not for all this land
Would I be guilty of so deep a sin.
BUCK. You are too senseless-obstinate, my lord,
Too ceremonious and traditional:
Weigh it but with the grossness of this age,
You break not sanctuary in seizing him.
The benefit thereof is always granted
To those whose dealings have deserved the place,
And those who have the wit to claim the place:
This prince hath neither claim'd it nor deserved it;
And therefore, in mine opinion, cannot have it:
Then, taking him from thence that is not there,
You break no privilege nor charter there.

---

44 *senseless-obstinate*] unreasonable in obstinacy.
45 *Too . . . traditional*] Too much attached to ceremonies and traditions.
46 *Weigh . . . age*] Consider it in the light of the unlicensed temper of the times (which calls for high-handed action).

Oft have I heard of sanctuary men;
But sanctuary children ne'er till now.
CARD. My lord, you shall o'er-rule my mind for once.
Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?
HAST. I go, my lord.
PRINCE. Good lords, make all the speedy haste you may. [*Exeunt Cardinal and Hastings.*
Say, uncle Gloucester, if our brother come,
Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?
GLOU. Where it seems best unto your royal self.
If I may counsel you, some day or two
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower:
Then where you please, and shall be thought most fit
For your best health and recreation.
PRINCE. I do not like the Tower, of any place.
Did Julius Cæsar build that place, my lord?
BUCK. He did, my gracious lord, begin that place;
Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified.
PRINCE. Is it upon record, or else reported
Successively from age to age, he built it?
BUCK. Upon record, my gracious lord.
PRINCE. But say, my lord, it were not register'd,
Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
As 't were retail'd to all posterity,
Even to the general all-ending day.
GLOU. [*Aside*] So wise so young, they say, do never live long.
PRINCE. What say you, uncle?

---

77 *retail'd*] recounted, rehearsed.

GLOU. I say, without characters, fame lives long.
[*Aside*] Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,
I moralize two meanings in one word.
PRINCE. That Julius Cæsar was a famous man;
With what his valour did enrich his wit,
His wit set down to make his valour live:
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.
I'll tell you what, my cousin Buckingham, —
BUCK. What, my gracious lord? 90
PRINCE. An if I live until I be a man,
I'll win our ancient right in France again,
Or die a soldier, as I lived a king.
GLOU. [*Aside*] Short summers lightly have a forward spring.

81 *without characters*] without the help of letters or inscriptions. "Characters" is invariably accented by Shakespeare on the second syllable.

82 *Thus . . . Iniquity*] In the old Morality plays the leading character in attendance on the Devil bore the conventional ("formal") designation of "The Vice," and indulged in persistent word-play. The character was occasionally known by the more specific name of "Iniquity" or "Hypocrisy" or some other sin.

83 *I moralize . . . word*] I give this word a double interpretation. Gloucester is referring to the word "characters," which he has just used. It means both "written characters" (or "records"), and "individuality" of temperament. Gloucester is hazily suggesting that had his victim, the young prince, lacked character or individuality, there was no reason why he should not be suffered to live long. "Moralize," which is naturally suggested by Gloucester's reference to "the formal Vice, Iniquity" of the Morality play, often bore the sense of "interpret."

94 *lightly*] commonly; a rare usage deduced from the meaning of "easily" or "readily" which often attaches to the word.

Enter young YORK, HASTINGS, *and the* CARDINAL

BUCK. Now, in good time, here comes the Duke of York.

PRINCE. Richard of York! how fares our loving brother?

YORK. Well, my dread lord; so must I call you now.

PRINCE. Ay, brother, to our grief, as it is yours:
Too late he died that might have kept that title,
Which by his death hath lost much majesty.

GLOU. How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

YORK. I thank you, gentle uncle. O, my lord,
You said that idle weeds are fast in growth:
The prince my brother hath outgrown me far.

GLOU. He hath, my lord.

YORK. And therefore is he idle?

GLOU. O, my fair cousin, I must not say so.

YORK. Then he is more beholding to you than I.

GLOU. He may command me as my sovereign;
But you have power in me as in a kinsman.

YORK. I pray you, uncle, give me this dagger.

GLOU. My dagger, little cousin? with all my heart

PRINCE. A beggar, brother?

YORK. Of my kind uncle, that I know will give;
And being but a toy, which is no grief to give.

GLOU. A greater gift than that I'll give my cousin.

YORK. A greater gift! O, that's the sword to it.

---

99 *late*] lately, recently.

103 *You said . . . growth*] Cf. II, iv, 12 *seq.*, *supra*.

116 *the sword to it*] the belt, which carried the dagger, bore a sword in addition.

GLOU. Ay, gentle cousin, were it light enough.
YORK. O, then, I see, you will part but with light gifts;
In weightier things you 'll say a beggar nay.
GLOU. It is too heavy for your grace to wear.
YORK. I weigh it lightly, were it heavier.
GLOU. What, would you have my weapon, little lord?
YORK. I would, that I might thank you as you call me.
GLOU. How?
YORK. Little.
PRINCE. My Lord of York will still be cross in talk:
Uncle, your grace knows how to bear with him.
YORK. You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me:
Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
Because that I am little, like an ape,
He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.
BUCK. With what a sharp-provided wit he reasons!
To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,
He prettily and aptly taunts himself:
So cunning and so young is wonderful.
GLOU. My lord, will 't please you pass along?
Myself and my good cousin Buckingham
Will to your mother, to entreat of her
To meet you at the Tower and welcome you.
YORK. What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

121 *I . . . lightly*] I should mind very little. Cf. *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 27: "You *weigh* me not? — O, that 's you *care not* for me."
126 *cross*] at cross purposes, malapert.
130–131 *like an ape . . . on your shoulders*] apes were commonly carried on the shoulders by their keepers.
132 *sharp-provided*] The hyphen is due to Theobald. The meaning is, "equipped with sharpness."

PRINCE. My lord protector needs will have it so.
YORK. I shall not sleep in quiet at the Tower.
GLOU. Why, what should you fear?
YORK. Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost:
My grandam told me he was murder'd there.
PRINCE. I fear no uncles dead.
GLOU. Nor none that live, I hope.
PRINCE. An if they live, I hope I need not fear.
But come, my lord; and with a heavy heart,
Thinking on them, go I unto the Tower.

[*A Sennet. Exeunt all but Gloucester, Buckingham and Catesby.*

BUCK. Think you, my lord, this little prating York
Was not incensed by his subtle mother
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously?
GLOU. No doubt, no doubt: O, 't is a parlous boy;
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable:
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.
BUCK. Well, let them rest. Come hither, Catesby.
Thou art sworn as deeply to effect what we intend,
As closely to conceal what we impart:
Thou know'st our reasons urged upon the way;
What think'st thou? is it not an easy matter
To make William Lord Hastings of our mind,
For the instalment of this noble duke
In the seat royal of this famous isle?
CATE. He for his father's sake so loves the prince,
That he will not be won to aught against him.

150 (stage direction) *A Sennet*] A flourish on a trumpet, marking the entrance or exit of a procession.

154 *a parlous boy*] "un enfant terrible." Cf. II, iv, 35, *supra*.

BUCK. What think'st thou then of Stanley? what will he?

CATE. He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

BUCK. Well, then, no more but this: go, gentle Catesby,
And, as it were far off, sound thou Lord Hastings,
How he doth stand affected to our purpose;
And summon him to-morrow to the Tower,
To sit about the coronation.
If thou dost find him tractable to us,
Encourage him, and show him all our reasons:
If he be leaden, icy-cold, unwilling,
Be thou so too; and so break off your talk,
And give us notice of his inclination:
For we to-morrow hold divided councils,
Wherein thyself shalt highly be employ'd.

GLOU. Commend me to Lord William: tell him, Catesby,
His ancient knot of dangerous adversaries
To-morrow are let blood at Pomfret-castle;
And bid my friend, for joy of this good news,
Give Mistress Shore one gentle kiss the more.

BUCK. Good Catesby, go, effect this business soundly.

CATE. My good lords both, with all the heed I may.

---

171 *stand affected*] feel disposed.

179 *divided councils*] two separate councils, one of Gloucester's supporters and the other of the young prince's.

183 *let blood*] killed.

185 *Mistress Shore*] On Edward IV's death, according to Holinshed. Hastings made Jane Shore his mistress; Cf. III, v, 31, and IV, iv, 69, *infra*.

GLOU. Shall we hear from you, Catesby, ere we sleep?
CATE. You shall, my lord.
GLOU. At Crosby Place, there shall you find us both.
[*Exit Catesby.*
BUCK. Now, my lord, what shall we do, if we perceive
Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?
GLOU. Chop off his head, man; somewhat we will do:
And, look, when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford, and the moveables
Whereof the king my brother stood possess'd.
BUCK. I'll claim that promise at your grace's hands.
GLOU. And look to have it yielded with all willingness.
Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards
We may digest our complots in some form. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — BEFORE LORD HASTINGS' HOUSE

Enter a Messenger

MESS. What, ho! my lord
HAST. [*Within*] Who knocks at the door?
MESS. A messenger from the Lord Stanley.

Enter LORD HASTINGS

HAST. What is 't o'clock?
MESS. Upon the stroke of four.
HAST. Cannot thy master sleep these tedious nights?

---

190 *Crosby Place*] See I, ii, 212, *supra*, and note.
192 *complots*] conspiracies; used again in line 200, *infra*.

MESS. So it should seem by that I have to say.
First, he commends him to your noble lordship.
HAST. And then?
MESS. And then he sends you word
He dreamt to-night the boar had razed his helm:
Besides, he says there are two councils held;
And that may be determined at the one
Which may make you and him to rue at the other.
Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,
If presently you will take horse with him,
And with all speed post with him toward the north,
To shun the danger that his soul divines.
HAST. Go, fellow, go, return unto thy lord;
Bid him not fear the separated councils:
His honour and myself are at the one,
And at the other is my servant Catesby;
Where nothing can proceed that toucheth us,
Whereof I shall not have intelligence.
Tell him his fears are shallow, wanting instance:
And for his dreams, I wonder he is so fond

11 *razed his helm*] tore off his head. The early Quartos here read *raste*, and the early Folios *rased off*. The phrase in the text is drawn direct from the *Chronicles* of Holinshed, where Stanley is said to have dreamt that "a boare with his tuskes so *rased them* both [*i. e.*, Stanley and Hastings] *by the heads*, that the bloud ran about both their shoulders" (III, 723). The verb "raze" is frequently applied to the violent rending action of the boar's tusks. The "boar" here, as in lines 28 *seq.*, typifies of course Richard, Duke of Gloucester, whose cognizance was a boar or hog. Cf. III, iv, 81, and V, iii, 156, *infra*.

23 *toucheth*] injureth. Cf. II, iii, 26, *supra*.

25 *wanting instance*] without example or proof.

To trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers:
To fly the boar before the boar pursues,
Were to incense the boar to follow us,
And make pursuit where he did mean no chase.
Go, bid thy master rise and come to me;
And we will both together to the Tower,
Where, he shall see, the boar will use us kindly.

MESS. My gracious lord, I'll tell him what you say.

[*Exit.*

Enter CATESBY

CATE. Many good morrows to my noble lord!

HAST. Good morrow, Catesby; you are early stirring:
What news, what news, in this our tottering state?

CATE. It is a reeling world indeed, my lord;
And I believe 't will never stand upright
Till Richard wear the garland of the realm.

HAST. How! wear the garland! dost thou mean the crown?

CATE. Ay, my good lord.

HAST. I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders,
Ere I will see the crown so foul misplaced.
But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

CATE. Ay, on my life, and hopes to find you forward
Upon his party for the gain thereof:
And thereupon he sends you this good news,
That this same very day your enemies,
The kindred of the queen, must die at Pomfret.

HAST. Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,

Because they have been still mine enemies:
But, that I'll give my voice on Richard's side,
To bar my master's heirs in true descent,
God knows I will not do it, to the death.
CATE. God keep your lordship in that gracious mind!
HAST. But I shall laugh at this a twelve-month hence,
That they who brought me in my master's hate,
I live to look upon their tragedy.
I tell thee, Catesby, —
CATE. What, my lord?
HAST. Ere a fortnight make me elder,
I'll send some packing that yet think not on it.
CATE. 'T is a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,
When men are unprepared and look not for it.
HAST. O monstrous, monstrous! and so falls it out
With Rivers, Vaughan, Grey: and so 't will do
With some men else, who think themselves as safe
As thou and I; who, as thou know'st, are dear
To princely Richard and to Buckingham.
CATE. The princes both make high account of you;
[*Aside*] For they account his head upon the bridge.
HAST. I know they do; and I have well deserved it.

Enter LORD STANLEY

Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man?
Fear you the boar, and go so unprovided?

---

52 *still*] always.

72 *they account . . . bridge*] A quibbling reference to the practice of exposing on a pole, fixed to the roof of a tower on London Bridge, the heads of those who were executed for high treason.

STAN. My lord, good morrow; good morrow, Catesby:
You may jest on, but, by the holy rood,
I do not like these several councils, I.
HAST. My lord,
I hold my life as dear as you do yours;
And never in my life, I do protest,
Was it more precious to me than 't is now:
Think you, but that I know our state secure,
I would be so triumphant as I am?
STAN. The lords at Pomfret, when they rode from London,
Were jocund and supposed their state was sure,
And they indeed had no cause to mistrust;
But yet, you see, how soon the day o'ercast.
This sudden stab of rancour I misdoubt:
Pray God, I say, I prove a needless coward!
What, shall we toward the Tower? the day is spent.
HAST. Come, come, have with you. Wot you what, my lord?
To-day the lords you talk of are beheaded.

77 *rood*] the cross (on which Christ died).

78 *I . . . I*] Such repetition of pronouns was no uncommon method of expressing emphasis.

91 *the day is spent*] Thus the First Folio. The words are omitted from the Quartos. The scene opens at four o'clock in the morning; cf. line 5, *supra*. "The day is spent" therefore cannot mean "the day is ended," but merely that it is well advanced. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 717, "The night is *spent*," where the context shows that darkness is at its height.

92 *have with you*] I will go along with you.

STAN. They, for their truth, might better wear their heads,
Than some that have accused them wear their hats.
But come, my lord, let us away.

Enter a Pursuivant

HAST. Go on before; I'll talk with this good fellow.
[*Exeunt Stanley and Catesby.*
How now, sirrah! how goes the world with thee?
PURS. The better that your lordship please to ask.
HAST. I tell thee, man, 't is better with me now,
Than when I met thee last where now we meet:
Then was I going prisoner to the Tower,
By the suggestion of the queen's allies;
But now, I tell thee — keep it to thyself —
This day those enemies are put to death,
And I in better state than e'er I was.
PURS. God hold it, to your honour's good content!
HAST. Gramercy, fellow: there, drink that for me.
[*Throws him his purse.*
PURS. God save your lordship. [*Exit.*

Enter a Priest

PRIEST. Well met, my lord; I am glad to see your honour.

94 *for their truth*] with respect to their honesty of purpose.

97 (stage direction) *Enter a Pursuivant*] Properly a pursuivant was an attendant on a herald, an officer of the college of arms, but the word was more often used, as here, for any messenger of a court of justice. It is also found in the general sense of messenger. Cf. III, iv, 90, and V, iii, 59, *infra.*

107 *God hold it*] God continue your good fortune.

HAST. I thank thee, good Sir John, with all my heart.
I am in your debt for your last exercise;
Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.
[*He whispers in his ear.*

Enter BUCKINGHAM

BUCK. What, talking with a priest, lord chamberlain?
Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest;
Your honour hath no shriving work in hand.
HAST. Good faith, and when I met this holy man,
Those men you talk of came into my mind.
What, go you toward the Tower?
BUCK. I do, my lord; but long I shall not stay:
I shall return before your lordship thence.
HAST. 'T is like enough, for I stay dinner there.
BUCK. [*Aside*] And supper too, although thou know'st it not.
Come, will you go?
HAST. I'll wait upon your lordship.
[*Exeunt.*

111 *good Sir John*] "Sir" was a courtesy title given to all clergymen. It translates the Latin "dominus," a designation to which all graduates in a university had a right. For "Sir" as a clerical title, cf. "*Sir* Topas" in *Tw. Night*, "*Sir* Oliver Martext" in *As You Like It*, and IV, v, 1, *infra*, "*Sir* Christopher."

112 *exercise*] religious exhortation, sermon.

116 *shriving work*] confession. Cf. III, iv, 97, "shrift," and *Hamlet*, V, ii, 47, "*shriving*-time."

SCENE III — POMFRET CASTLE

Enter SIR RICHARD RATCLIFF, *with halberds, carrying* RIVERS, GREY, *and* VAUGHAN *to death*

RAT. Come, bring forth the prisoners.
RIV. Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell thee this:
To-day shalt thou behold a subject die
For truth, for duty, and for loyalty.
GREY. God keep the prince from all the pack of you!
A knot you are of damned blood-suckers.
VAUG. You live that shall cry woe for this hereafter.
RAT. Dispatch; the limit of your lives is out.
RIV. O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!
Within the guilty closure of thy walls
Richard the second here was hack'd to death;
And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,
We give thee up our guiltless blood to drink.
GREY. Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads,
For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.
RIV. Then cursed she Hastings, then cursed she Buckingham,
Then cursed she Richard. O, remember, God,
To hear her prayers for them, as now for us!
And for my sister and her princely sons,
Be satisfied, dear God, with our true blood,
Which, as thou know'st, unjustly must be spilt.

11 *closure*] enclosure, compass. Cf. *Sonnet* xlviii, 11: "*Within the* gentle *closure of* my breast."

RAT. Make haste; the hour of death is expiate.
RIV. Come, Grey, come, Vaughan, let us all embrace:
And take our leave, until we meet in heaven. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — THE TOWER OF LONDON

Enter BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, *the* BISHOP OF ELY, RATCLIFF, LOVEL, *with others, and take their seats at a table*

HAST. My lords, at once: the cause why we are met
Is, to determine of the coronation.
In God's name, speak: when is the royal day?
BUCK. Are all things fitting for that royal time?
DER. It is, and wants but nomination.
ELY. To-morrow then I judge a happy day.
BUCK. Who knows the lord protector's mind herein?
Who is most inward with the noble duke?
ELY. Your grace, we think, should soonest know his mind.
BUCK. Who, I, my lord! We know each other's faces,

25 *Make . . . expiate*] Thus the First Folio. The Quartos generally read *Come, come, dispatch, the limit of your lives is out.* The Second and later Folios substitute in the First Folio reading *now expir'd* for *expiate.* Singer proposed to read (without precise authority) *expirate* in place of *expiate.* "Expiate" probably has the general significance of "completed," "brought to a close. Cf. *Sonnet* xxii, 4: "death my days should *expiate.*" In Chapman, *Byron's Conspiracy,* II, i, 90, "Expecate," sometimes printed "expiate," is found in the sense of "used up."

5 *nomination*] the naming of the day.

8 *inward*] intimate.

But for our hearts, he knows no more of mine
Than I of yours;
Nor I no more of his, than you of mine.
Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.
HAST. I thank his grace, I know he loves me well;
But, for his purpose in the coronation,
I have not sounded him, nor he deliver'd
His gracious pleasure any way therein:
But you, my noble lords, may name the time;
And in the duke's behalf I'll give my voice,
Which, I presume, he'll take in gentle part.

Enter GLOUCESTER

ELY. Now in good time, here comes the duke himself.
GLOU. My noble lords and cousins all, good morrow.
I have been long a sleeper; but, I hope,
My absence doth neglect no great designs,
Which by my presence might have been concluded.
BUCK. Had not you come upon your cue, my lord,
William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part, —
I mean, your voice, — for crowning of the king.
GLOU. Than my Lord Hastings no man might be bolder;
His lordship knows me well, and loves me well.
HAST. I thank your grace.
GLOU. My Lord of Ely!
ELY. My lord?

GLOU. When I was last in Holborn,
I saw good strawberries in your garden there:
I do beseech you send for some of them.

ELY. Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart.
[*Exit.*

GLOU. Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.
[*Drawing him aside.*
Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,
As he will lose his head ere give consent
His master's son, as worshipful he terms it,
Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.

BUCK. Withdraw you hence, my lord, I'll follow you. [*Exit Gloucester, Buckingham following.*

DER. We have not yet set down this day of triumph.
To-morrow, in mine opinion, is too sudden;
For I myself am not so well provided
As else I would be, were the day prolong'd.

Re-enter BISHOP OF ELY

ELY. Where is my lord protector? I have sent for these strawberries.

HAST. His grace looks cheerfully and smooth to-day;
There's some conceit or other likes him well,

33 *in Holborn*] The Bishop of Ely's London house was long situate in Holborn. It was transferred to the crown in 1772, and pulled down three years later. On the site was built the still existing thoroughfare known as Ely Place. Gloucester's request for the strawberries is drawn from More's *Life of Richard III*, which Holinshed appropriated.

51 *some conceit . . . likes him*] some thought or other pleases him.

When he doth bid good morrow with such a spirit.
I think there 's never a man in Christendom
That can less hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.
DER. What of his heart perceive you in his face
By any likelihood he show'd to-day?
HAST. Marry, that with no man here he is offended;
For, were he, he had shown it in his looks.
DER. I pray God he be not, I say.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER *and* BUCKINGHAM

GLOU. I pray you all, tell me what they deserve
That do conspire my death with devilish plots
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd
Upon my body with their hellish charms?
HAST. The tender love I bear your grace, my lord,
Makes me most forward in this noble presence
To doom the offenders, whatsoever they be:
I say, my lord, they have deserved death.
GLOU. Then be your eyes the witness of this ill:
See how I am bewitch'd; behold, mine arm
Is like a blasted sapling, withered up:
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,
Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.
HAST. If they have done this thing, my gracious lord, —
GLOU. If! thou protector of this damned strumpet,
Tellest thou me of "ifs"? Thou art a traitor:
Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul I swear,

I will not dine until I see the same.
Lovel and Ratcliff, look that it be done:
The rest that love me, rise and follow me.
[*Exeunt all but Hastings, Ratcliff and Lovel.*
HAST. Woe, woe for England! not a whit for me;
For I, too fond, might have prevented this.
Stanley did dream the boar did raze his helm;
But I disdain'd it, and did scorn to fly:
Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,
And startled, when he look'd upon the Tower,
As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house.
O, now I want the priest that spake to me:
I now repent I told the pursuivant,
As 't were triumphing at mine enemies,
How they at Pomfret bloodily were butcher'd,
And I myself secure in grace and favour.
O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse
Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!
RAT. Dispatch, my lord; the duke would be at dinner:
Make a short shrift; he longs to see your head.
HAST. O momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hopes in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,

84 *the boar . . . helm*] See note on III, ii, 11, *supra.*
86 *foot-cloth horse*] horse caparisoned with a rich cloth reaching nearly to the ground on each side. Cf. *2 Hen. VI*, IV, i, 54: "*foot-cloth* mule," and note.
90 *pursuivant*] See note on III, ii, 97, *supra.*
97 *shrift*] confession. Cf. III, ii, 116, *supra:* "*shriving* work."

Ready, with every nod, to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.
LOV. Come, come, dispatch; 't is bootless to exclaim.
HAST. O bloody Richard! miserable England!
I prophesy the fearfull'st time to thee
That ever wretched age hath look'd upon.
Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head:
They smile at me that shortly shall be dead. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V — THE TOWER-WALLS

Enter GLOUCESTER *and* BUCKINGHAM, *in rotten armour, marvellous ill-favoured*

GLOU. Come, cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy colour,
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
And then begin again, and stop again,
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?
BUCK. Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
Speak and look back, and pry on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,
Intending deep suspicion: ghastly looks
Are at my service, like enforced smiles;
And both are ready in their offices,
At any time, to grace my stratagems.
But what, is Catesby gone?
GLOU. He is; and, see, he brings the mayor along.

8 *Intending*] Pretending. Cf. III, vii, 45, *infra:* "*intend* some fear."

Enter the Mayor *and* Catesby

Buck. Lord mayor, —
Glou. Look to the drawbridge there!
Buck. Hark! a drum.
Glou. Catesby, o'erlook the walls.
Buck. Lord mayor, the reason we have sent —
Glou. Look back, defend thee, here are enemies.
Buck. God and our innocency defend and guard us!
Glou. Be patient, they are friends, Ratcliff and Lovel.

Enter Lovel *and* Ratcliff, *with* Hastings' *head*

Lov. Here is the head of that ignoble traitor,
The dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.
Glou. So dear I loved the man, that I must weep.
I took him for the plainest harmless creature
That breathed upon this earth a Christian;
Made him my book, wherein my soul recorded
The history of all her secret thoughts:
So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue
That, his apparent open guilt omitted,
I mean, his conversation with Shore's wife,
He lived from all attainder of suspect.
Buck. Well, well, he was the covert'st shelter'd traitor
That ever lived.
Would you imagine, or almost believe,
Were 't not that, by great preservation,

30 *apparent . . . omitted*] manifest . . . excepted.
31 *conversation*] criminal conversation; cf. III, i, 185, *supra*, and note.
32 *from all attainder of suspect*] free from all taint of suspicion. Cf. for "suspects," I, iii, 89, *supra:* "vile *suspects.*"

We live to tell it you, the subtle traitor
This day had plotted, in the council-house
To murder me and my good Lord of Gloucester?
MAY. What, had he so?
GLOU. What, think you we are Turks or infidels?
Or that we would, against the form of law,
Proceed thus rashly to the villain's death,
But that the extreme peril of the case,
The peace of England and our persons' safety,
Enforced us to this execution?
MAY. Now, fair befall you! he deserved his death;
And you, my good lords both, have well proceeded,
To warn false traitors from the like attempts.
I never look'd for better at his hands,
After he once fell in with Mistress Shore.
GLOU. Yet had not we determined he should die,
Until your lordship came to see his death;
Which now the loving haste of these our friends,
Somewhat against our meaning, have prevented:
Because, my lord, we would have had you heard
The traitor speak and timorously confess
The manner and the purpose of his treason;
That you might well have signified the same
Unto the citizens, who haply may
Misconstrue us in him and wail his death.
MAY. But, my good lord, your grace's word shall serve,

47 *fair befall you*] good fortune attend you. Cf. I, iii, 282, *supra*.
55 *have prevented*] have forestalled. The plural form of the verb with the singular subject "haste" is explained by the proximity of "friends."

As well as I had seen and heard him speak:
And doubt you not, right noble princes both,
But I'll acquaint our duteous citizens
With all your just proceedings in this cause.
GLOU. And to that end we wish'd your lordship here,
To avoid the carping censures of the world.
BUCK. But since you come too late of our intents,
Yet witness what you hear we did intend:
And so, my good lord mayor, we bid farewell.
[*Exit Mayor.*
GLOU. Go, after, after, cousin Buckingham.
The mayor towards Guildhall hies him in all post:
There, at your meet'st advantage of the time,
Infer the bastardy of Edward's children:
Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen,
Only for saying he would make his son
Heir to the crown, meaning indeed his house,
Which, by the sign thereof, was termed so.
Moreover, urge his hateful luxury
And bestial appetite in change of lust;
Which stretched to their servants, daughters, wives,

69 *too late of our intents*] too late for our plans or purposes.

74 *meet'st advantage*] fittest opportunity. This is the Quarto reading. The Folios read *meetest vantage.*

75 *Infer*] Allege, suggest. The word is thus used again, III, vii, 12, 32, and IV, iv, 343, and V, iii, 314, *infra.*

76–79 *a citizen . . . termed so*] Hall describes the execution by Edward IV's order, on the grounds given in these lines, of a citizen named Burdet, "who dwelt in Cheap Side, *at the signe of the Croune,* . . . over against Soper Lane."

Even where his lustful eye or savage heart,
Without control, listed to make his prey.
Nay, for a need, thus far come near my person:
Tell them, when that my mother went with child
Of that unsatiate Edward, noble York,
My princely father, then had wars in France;
And, by just computation of the time,
Found that the issue was not his begot;
Which well appeared in his lineaments,
Being nothing like the noble duke my father:
But touch this sparingly, as 't were far off;
Because you know, my lord, my mother lives.

BUCK. Fear not, my lord, I'll play the orator,
As if the golden fee for which I plead
Were for myself: and so, my lord, adieu.

GLOU. If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle;
Where you shall find me well accompanied
With reverend fathers and well-learned bishops.

BUCK. I go; and towards three or four o'clock
Look for the news that the Guildhall affords. [*Exit.*

GLOU. Go, Lovel, with all speed to Doctor Shaw;
[*To Cate.*] Go thou to Friar Penker; bid them both
Meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle.

[*Exeunt all but Gloucester.*

103–104 *Doctor Shaw . . . Friar Penker*] Well-known preachers of the day. Doctor Shaw was brother of the Lord Mayor.

105 *Baynard's Castle*] a palatial residence in the city of London, on the north bank of the Thames, not far from the south side of St. Paul's Cathedral. It had been recently occupied by Gloucester's father, Richard, Duke of York.

Now will I in, to take some privy order,
To draw the brats of Clarence out of sight;
And to give notice, that no manner of person
At any time have recourse unto the princes. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI — THE SAME

A STREET

Enter a Scrivener, *with a paper in his hand*

SCRIV. This is the indictment of the good Lord Hastings;
Which in a set hand fairly is engross'd,
That it may be this day read o'er in Paul's.
And mark how well the sequel hangs together:
Eleven hours I spent to write it over,
For yesternight by Catesby was it brought me;
The precedent was full as long a-doing:
And yet within these five hours lived Lord Hastings,
Untainted, unexamined, free, at liberty.
Here's a good world the while! Why, who's so gross,
That seeth not this palpable device?
Yet who's so blind, but says he sees it not?
Bad is the world; and all will come to nought,
When such bad dealing must be seen in thought.
[*Exit.*

7 *precedent*] first draft.
14 *in thought*] in silence, unvoiced.

SCENE VII — BAYNARD'S CASTLE

Enter GLOUCESTER *and* BUCKINGHAM, *at several doors*

GLOU. How now, my lord, what say the citizens?
BUCK. Now, by the holy mother of our Lord,
The citizens are mum, and speak not a word.
GLOU. Touch'd you the bastardy of Edward's children?
BUCK. I did; with his contract with Lady Lucy,
And his contract by deputy in France;
The insatiate greediness of his desires,
And his enforcement of the city wives;
His tyranny for trifles; his own bastardy,
As being got, your father then in France,
And his resemblance, being not like the duke:
Withal I did infer your lineaments,
Being the right idea of your father,
Both in your form and nobleness of mind;
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,

5–6 *his . . . France*] Thus the Folios. These words, like lines 8 and 11 ("And his enforcement . . . like the duke") in this speech, are omitted from the Quartos. The allegation that Edward IV's marriage with Lady Elizabeth Grey was invalid owing to pre-contracts with other ladies seems unjustified. Elizabeth Lucy, mistress of Edward IV, to whom reference is made in lines 5 and 179 of this scene, herself denied that he offered her marriage. The proposal that Edward IV should marry Lady Bona, daughter of the Duke of Savoy, and sister of King Louis XI of France, was made by the Earl of Warwick, acting as the king's deputy, but did not get beyond the stage of discussion.

12 *infer*] allege. Cf. III, v, 75, *supra*, and 32, *infra*.

13 *idea*] image.

Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility;
Indeed left nothing fitting for the purpose
Untouch'd or slightly handled in discourse:
And when mine oratory grew to an end,
I bid them that did love their country's good
Cry "God save Richard, England's royal king!"

GLOU. Ah! and did they so?

BUCK. No, so God help me, they spake not a word;
But, like dumb statuës or breathing stones,
Gazed each on other, and look'd deadly pale.
Which when I saw, I reprehended them;
And ask'd the mayor what meant this wilful silence:
His answer was, the people were not wont
To be spoke to but by the recorder.
Then he was urged to tell my tale again:
"Thus saith the duke, thus hath the duke inferr'd;"
But nothing spake in warrant from himself.
When he had done, some followers of mine own
At the lower end of the hall hurl'd up their caps,
And some ten voices cried "God save King Richard!"
And thus I took the vantage of those few,
"Thanks, gentle citizens and friends!" quoth I,
"This general applause and loving shout
Argues your wisdoms and your love to Richard;"
And even here brake off, and came away.

GLOU. What tongueless blocks were they! would they not speak?

---

25 *statuës*] This word is always a trisyllable in Shakespeare, and is often written statuas.

BUCK. No, by my troth, my lord.
GLOU. Will not the mayor then and his brethren come?
BUCK. The mayor is here at hand: intend some fear;
Be not you spoke with, but by mighty suit:
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,
And stand betwixt two churchmen, good my lord;
For on that ground I'll build a holy descant:
And be not easily won to our request;
Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it.
GLOU. I go; and if you plead as well for them
As I can say nay to thee for myself,
No doubt we'll bring it to a happy issue.
BUCK. Go, go up to the leads; the lord mayor knocks. [*Exit Gloucester.*

Enter the Mayor *and* Citizens

Welcome, my lord: I dance attendance here;
I think the duke will not be spoke withal.

---

45 *intend*] pretend. Cf. III, v, 8, *supra.*
48 *churchmen*] clergymen.
49 *ground . . . descant*] "ground" is the plain-song or melody which forms the basis of the "descant," *i. e.*, the musical accompaniment of a song. For "descant" used as a verb see I, i, 27, *supra,* and note.
51 *Play the maid's part . . . nay*] Cf. *Pass. Pilg.*, 340: "*A woman's nay* doth stand for nought."
55 *the leads*] the roof, the topmost part of the building, which was covered with sheets of lead.

Enter CATESBY

Here comes his servant: how now, Catesby,
What says he?
CATE. My lord, he doth entreat your grace
To visit him to-morrow or next day:
He is within, with two right reverend fathers,
Divinely bent to meditation;
And in no worldly suit would he be moved,
To draw him from his holy exercise.
BUCK. Return, good Catesby, to thy lord again;
Tell him, myself, the mayor and citizens,
In deep designs and matters of great moment,
No less importing than our general good,
Are come to have some conference with his grace.
CATE. I'll tell him what you say, my lord. [*Exit.*
BUCK. Ah, ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward!
He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed,
But on his knees at meditation;
Not dallying with a brace of courtezans,
But meditating with two deep divines;
Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,
But praying, to enrich his watchful soul:
Happy were England, would this gracious prince
Take on himself the sovereignty thereof:
But, sure, I fear, we shall ne'er win him to it.

72 *lolling*] Pope's emendation of *lulling*, the reading of all the early editions; "day-bed" means couch or sofa.
76 *engross*] make gross, fatten.

MAY. Marry, God forbid his grace should say us nay!
BUCK. I fear he will.

Re-enter CATESBY

How now, Catesby, what says your lord?
CATE. My lord,
He wonders to what end you have assembled
Such troops of citizens to speak with him,
His grace not being warn'd thereof before:
My lord, he fears you mean no good to him.
BUCK. Sorry I am my noble cousin should
Suspect me, that I mean no good to him:
By heaven, I come in perfect love to him;
And so once more return and tell his grace. [*Exit Catesby.*
When holy and devout religious men
Are at their beads, 't is hard to draw them thence,
So sweet is zealous contemplation.

Enter GLOUCESTER *aloft, between two* Bishops. CATESBY *returns*

MAY. See, where he stands between two clergymen!
BUCK. Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,
To stay him from the fall of vanity:
And, see, a book of prayer in his hand,
True ornaments to know a holy man.
Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,

81 *God forbid*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *God defend*, which has the same meaning. Cf. line 173, *infra*.

98–99 *And, see, . . . man*] Thus the Folios. These two lines are omitted in the Quartos, like lines 120 and 127, *infra*.

Lend favourable ears to our request;
And pardon us the interruption
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.
GLOU. My lord, there needs no such apology:
I rather do beseech you pardon me,
Who, earnest in the service of my God,
Neglect the visitation of my friends.
But, leaving this, what is your grace's pleasure?
BUCK. Even that, I hope, which pleaseth God above,
And all good men of this ungovern'd isle.
GLOU. I do suspect I have done some offence
That seems disgracious in the city's eyes,
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.
BUCK. You have, my lord: would it might please your grace,
At our entreaties, to amend that fault!
GLOU. Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?
BUCK. Then know, it is your fault that you resign
The supreme seat, the throne majestical,
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,
Your state of fortune and your due of birth,
The lineal glory of your royal house,
To the corruption of a blemish'd stock:
Whilst, in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts,
Which here we waken to our country's good,
This noble isle doth want her proper limbs;

120 *due of birth*] birthright, right of inheritance, "right of birth" (l. 136). Cf. 158, *infra*, and *Macb.*, III, vi, 25: "From whom this tyrant holds the *due of birth*."

Her face defaced with scars of infamy,
Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants,
And almost shoulder'd in the swallowing gulf
Of blind forgetfulness and dark oblivion.
Which to recure, we heartily solicit
Your gracious self to take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land;
Not as protector, steward, substitute,
Or lowly factor for another's gain;
But as successively, from blood to blood,
Your right of birth, your empery, your own.
For this, consorted with the citizens,
Your very worshipful and loving friends,
And by their vehement instigation,
In this just suit come I to move your grace.

GLOU. I know not whether to depart in silence,
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof,
Best fitteth my degree or your condition:
If not to answer, you might haply think
Tongue-tied ambition, not replying, yielded
To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty,
Which fondly you would here impose on me;
If to reprove you for this suit of yours
So season'd with your faithful love to me,

128 *shoulder'd in*] jostled into.

130 *recure*] cure. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 465, "A smile *recures* the wounding of a frown," and *Sonnets*, xlv, 9. The usage is common.

135 *successively*] in due succession.

136 *empery*] dominion.

144–153 *If not . . . answer you*] Thus the Folios. These lines are omitted from the Quartos.

Then, on the other side, I check'd my friends.
Therefore, to speak, and to avoid the first,
And then, in speaking, not to incur the last,
Definitively thus I answer you.
Your love deserves my thanks, but my desert
Unmeritable shuns your high request.
First, if all obstacles were cut away
And that my path were even to the crown,
As my right revenue and due by birth;
Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,
So mighty and so many my defects,
As I had rather hide me from my greatness,
Being a bark to brook no mighty sea,
Than in my greatness covet to be hid,
And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.
But, God be thanked, there's no need of me,
And much I need to help you, if need were;
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit,
Which, mellow'd by the stealing hours of time,
Will well become the seat of majesty,
And make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.
On him I lay what you would lay on me,
The right and fortune of his happy stars;
Which God defend that I should wring from him!

158 *due by birth*] birthright, right of inheritance. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *due* of *birth*. Cf. lines 120 ("due of birth") and 136 ("right of birth"), *supra*.

166 *much I need to help you*] much I lack of the capacity to help you.

168 *the stealing hours of time*] Cf. *Hamlet*, V, i, 79: "*age*, with his *stealing* steps."

173 *God defend*] God forbid. Cf. line 81, *supra*, and note.

BUCK. My lord, this argues conscience in your grace;
But the respects thereof are nice and trivial,
All circumstances well considered.
You say that Edward is your brother's son:
So say we too, but not by Edward's wife;
For first he was contract to Lady Lucy —
Your mother lives a witness to that vow —
And afterward by substitute betroth'd
To Bona, sister to the King of France.
These both put by, a poor petitioner,
A care-crazed mother of a many children,
A beauty-waning and distressed widow,
Even in the afternoon of her best days,
Made prize and purchase of his lustful eye,
Seduced the pitch and height of all his thoughts
To base declension and loathed bigamy:
By her, in his unlawful bed, he got
This Edward, whom our manners term the prince.
More bitterly could I expostulate,
Save that, for reverence to some alive,
I give a sparing limit to my tongue.
Then, good my lord, take to your royal self
This proffer'd benefit of dignity;

175 *respects . . . nice*] inferences . . . punctilious, fanciful.
179 *contract*] betrothed. Cf. line 5, *supra*, and note.
182 *Bona . . . France*] Cf. line 6, *supra*, and note.
188 *pitch*] a common term in falconry for the hawk's highest flight.
189 *bigamy*] According to canon law in Edward IV's time, marriage with a widow constituted bigamy. In More's *Life of Richard III*, as followed by Holinshed, Gloucester's mother charges him with bigamy on this ground.

If not to bless us and the land withal,
Yet to draw forth your noble ancestry
From the corruption of abusing times,
Unto a lineal true-derived course.
MAY. Do, good my lord, your citizens entreat you.
BUCK. Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffer'd love.
CATE. O, make them joyful, grant their lawful suit!
GLOU. Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?
I am unfit for state and majesty:
I do beseech you, take it not amiss;
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.
BUCK. If you refuse it, — as, in love and zeal,
Loath to depose the child, your brother's son;
As well we know your tenderness of heart
And gentle, kind, effeminate remorse,
Which we have noted in you to your kin,
And egally indeed to all estates, —
Yet whether you accept our suit or no,
Your brother's son shall never reign our king;
But we will plant some other in the throne,
To the disgrace and downfall of your house:
And in this resolution here we leave you.
Come, citizens: 'zounds! I'll entreat no more.

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202 *Refuse . . . love*] Thus the Folios. The line is omitted from the Quartos.

211 *remorse*] sense of pity.

213 *egally*] Thus the First Folio and the early Quartos. The Second Folio and later editions substitute the common form of the word, *equally*.

219–220 *Come . . . Buckingham*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios, which omit the second line, substitute for the first *Come, citizens, we will entreat no more.*

GLOU. O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.
[*Exit Buckingham with the Citizens.*
CATE. Call them again, my lord, and accept their suit:
ANOTHER. Do, good my lord, lest all the land do rue it.
GLOU. Would you enforce me to a world of care?
Well, call them again. I am not made of stones,
But penetrable to your kind entreats,
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM *and the rest*

Cousin of Buckingham, and you sage, grave men,
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
To bear her burthen, whether I will or no,
I must have patience to endure the load:
But if black scandal or foul-faced reproach
Attend the sequel of your imposition,
Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me
From all the impure blots and stains thereof;
For God he knows, and you may partly see,
How far I am from the desire thereof.
MAY. God bless your grace! we see it, and will say it.
GLOU. In saying so, you shall but say the truth.
BUCK. Then I salute you with this kingly title:
Long live Richard, England's royal king!
MAY. AND CIT. Amen.
BUCK. To-morrow will it please you to be crown'd?

225 *entreats*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios substitute the ordinary form *entreaties*.
233 *acquittance*] acquit.

GLOU. Even when you please, since you will have it so.

BUCK. To-morrow then we will attend your grace:
And so most joyfully we take our leave.

GLOU. Come, let us to our holy task again.
Farewell, good cousin; farewell, gentle friends.

[*Exeunt.*

245 *And so . . . leave*] Thus the Folios. The line is omitted from the Quartos.

ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

BEFORE THE TOWER

Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF YORK, *and* MARQUESS OF DORSET; *on the other,* ANNE, DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER, *leading* LADY MARGARET PLANTAGENET, CLARENCE'S *young daughter*

DUCHESS

WHO MEETS US HERE? MY niece Plantagenet
Led in the hand of her kind aunt Gloucester?
Now, for my life, she's wandering to the Tower,
On pure heart's love to greet the tender princes.
Daughter, well met.

ANNE. God give your graces both
A happy and a joyful time of day!

Q. ELIZ. As much to you, good sister! Whither away?

ANNE. No farther than the Tower, and, as I guess,

Upon the like devotion as yourselves,
To gratulate the gentle princes there.
Q. Eliz. Kind sister, thanks: we 'll enter all together.

Enter Brakenbury

And, in good time, here the lieutenant comes.
Master lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,
How doth the prince, and my young son of York?
Brak. Right well, dear madam. By your patience,
I may not suffer you to visit them;
The king hath straitly charged the contrary.
Q. Eliz. The king! why, who 's that?
Brak. I cry you mercy: I mean the lord protector.
Q. Eliz. The Lord protect him from that kingly title!
Hath he set bounds betwixt their love and me?
I am their mother; who should keep me from them?
Duch. I am their father's mother; I will see them.
Anne. Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother:
Then bring me to their sights; I 'll bear thy blame,
And take thy office from thee, on my peril.

1 *niece*] granddaughter.

2 *aunt of Gloucester*] This lady, Anne, widow, or rather affianced bride, of Prince Edward, Henry VI's son and heir, was solicited in marriage by Gloucester while acting as chief mourner at Henry VI's funeral. See I, ii, *supra*. The lady, who has not figured in the play since the second scene, has become in the meantime her crafty suitor's wife. Lady Margaret Plantagenet, whom she holds by the hand, was daughter of her sister, the late Duchess of Clarence; see II, ii, 2, *supra*, and note.

2–6 *Led . . . day*] Thus the Folios. The lines are omitted in the Quartos.

24 *in law*] by marriage.

BRAK. No, madam, no; I may not leave it so:
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me. [*Exit.*

Enter LORD STANLEY

STAN. Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,
And I 'll salute your grace of York as mother,
And reverend looker on, of two fair queens.
[*To Anne.*] Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.
Q. ELIZ. O, cut my lace in sunder, that my pent heart
May have some scope to beat, or else I swoon
With this dead-killing news!
ANNE. Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!
DOR. Be of good cheer: mother, how fares your grace?
Q. ELIZ. O Dorset, speak not to me, get thee hence!
Death and destruction dog thee at the heels;
Thy mother's name is ominous to children.
If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,
And live with Richmond, from the reach of hell:
Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house,
Lest thou increase the number of the dead;
And make me die the thrall of Margaret's curse,
Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted queen.
STAN. Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;
You shall have letters from me to my son

27 *leave it*] part from my office, infringe my duty.

To meet you on the way, and welcome you.
Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.
DUCH. O ill-dispersing wind of misery!
O my accursed womb, the bed of death!
A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,
Whose unavoided eye is murderous.
STAN. Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.
ANNE. And I in all unwillingness will go.
I would to God that the inclusive verge
Of golden metal that must round my brow
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,
And die, ere men can say, God save the queen!
Q. ELIZ. Go, go, poor soul, I envy not thy glory;
To feed my humour, wish thyself no harm.
ANNE. No! why? When he that is my husband now
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse,
When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands
Which issued from my other angel husband,
And that dead saint which then I weeping follow'd;
O, when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face,
This was my wish: "Be thou," quoth I, "accursed,
For making me, so young, so old a widow!
And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;
And be thy wife — if any be so mad —

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55 *cockatrice*] a fabulous serpent, also known as the basilisk, whose glance was deadly. Cf. *Lucrece*, 540: "a *cockatrice' dead-killing eye.*"

61 *red-hot steel*] regicides or conspirators against the lives of kings were often punished in the middle ages by setting on their brows a crown of iron heated red-hot.

As miserable by the death of thee
As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!"
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,
Even in so short a space, my woman's heart
Grossly grew captive to his honey words,
And proved the subject of my own soul's curse,
Which ever since hath kept my eyes from rest;
For never yet one hour in his bed
Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,
But have been waked by his timorous dreams.
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick;
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

Q. ELIZ. Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

ANNE. No more than from my soul I mourn for yours.

DOR. Farewell, thou woful welcomer of glory!

ANNE. Adieu, poor soul, that takest thy leave of it!

DUCH. [*To Dorset*] Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

[*To Anne*] Go thou to Richard, and good angels guard thee!

[*To Queen Eliz.*] Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!

I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!
Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,
And each hour's joy wreck'd with a week of teen.

76–77 *As miserable . . . death*] These lines are repeated with slight change from I, ii, 27–28, *supra*.

84 *golden dew of sleep*] Cf. *Jul. Caes.*, II, i, 230: "the honey-heavy *dew of slumber*."

97 *teen*] grief; an archaic word of common occurrence in Elizabethan poetry.

Q. Eliz. Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower.
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes
Whom envy hath immured within your walls!
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!
Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow
For tender princes, use my babies well!
So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — LONDON

THE PALACE

Sennet. Enter Richard, *in pomp, crowned;* Buckingham, Catesby, *a* Page, *and others*

K. Rich. Stand all apart. Cousin of Buckingham!
Buck. My gracious sovereign?
K. Rich. Give me thy hand. [*Here he ascendeth the throne.*] Thus high, by thy advice
And thy assistance, is king Richard seated:
But shall we wear these honours for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?
Buck. Still live they, and for ever may they last!
K. Rich. O Buckingham, now do I play the touch,
To try if thou be current gold indeed:
Young Edward lives: think now what I would say.
Buck. Say on, my loving lord.
K. Rich. Why, Buckingham, I say, I would be king.
Buck. Why, so you are, my thrice renowned liege.

8 *play the touch*] make play with the touchstone, or true test (of metals).

K. RICH. Ha! am I king? 'tis so: but Edward lives.

BUCK. True, noble prince.

K. RICH. O bitter consequence,
That Edward still should live true noble prince!
Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull:
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead;
And I would have it suddenly perform'd.
What sayest thou? speak suddenly; be brief.

BUCK. Your grace may do your pleasure.

K. RICH. Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness freezeth:
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

BUCK. Give me some breath, some little pause, my lord,
Before I positively speak herein:
I will resolve your grace immediately. [*Exit.*

CATE. [*Aside to a stander by*] The king is angry: see, he bites the lip.

K. RICH. I will converse with iron-witted fools
And unrespective boys: none are for me
That look into me with considerate eyes:
High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.
Boy!

PAGE. My lord?

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26 *resolve*] definitely answer, satisfy. Cf. IV, v, 19, *infra.*
your grace immediately] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *you herein presently;* "presently" means "immediately."

28 *iron-witted*] dull-witted, wooden-headed.

29 *unrespective*] careless, thoughtless. Cf. *Lucrece*, 275: "*Respect* and reason, wait on *wrinkled age!*"

K. Rich. Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold
Would tempt unto a close exploit of death?
Page. My lord, I know a discontented gentleman,
Whose humble means match not his haughty mind:
Gold were as good as twenty orators,
And will, no doubt, tempt him to any thing.
K. Rich. What is his name?
Page. His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.
K. Rich. I partly know the man: go, call him hither.
[*Exit Page.*
The deep-revolving witty Buckingham
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsel:
Hath he so long held out with me untired,
And stops he now for breath?

Enter Stanley

How now! what news with you?
Stan. My lord, I hear the Marquis Dorset's fled
To Richmond, in those parts beyond the seas
Where he abides. [*Stands apart.*
K. Rich. Catesby!
Cate. My lord?
K. Rich. Rumour it abroad
That Anne, my wife, is sick and like to die:
I will take order for her keeping close.
Inquire me out some mean-born gentleman,
Whom I will marry straight to Clarence' daughter:

42 *witty*] knowing, clever.
54 *take order*] take measures, arrange. Cf. IV, iv, 539, *infra*.

The boy is foolish, and I fear not him.
Look, how thou dream'st! I say again, give out
That Anne my wife is sick, and like to die:
About it; for it stands me much upon,
To stop all hopes whose growth may damage me.
[*Exit Catesby.*
I must be married to my brother's daughter,
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

Re-enter Page, *with* TYRREL

Is thy name Tyrrel?
TYR. James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.
K. RICH. Art thou, indeed?
TYR. Prove me, my gracious sovereign.
K. RICH. Darest thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?
TYR. Ay, my lord;
But I had rather kill two enemies.
K. RICH. Why, there thou hast it: two deep enemies,
Foes to my rest and my sweet sleep's disturbers

60 *it stands me much upon*] it is a matter of importance for me. Cf. *Com. of Errors*, IV, i, 68: "consider how *it stands upon* my credit."

62 *my brother's daughter*] Edward IV's eldest daughter Elizabeth, who happily escaped marriage with her uncle and became the wife of his successor Henry VII.

65–66 *I am in . . . blood*] Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 137: "*I am in blood* Stepp'd *in so far.*"

Are they that I would have thee deal upon:
Tyrrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.
TYR. Let me have open means to come to them,
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.
K. RICH. Thou sing'st sweet music. Hark, come hither, Tyrrel:
Go, by this token: rise, and lend thine ear: [*Whispers.*
There is no more but so: say it is done,
And I will love thee, and prefer thee too.
TYR. 'T is done, my gracious lord.
K. RICH. Shall we hear from thee, Tyrrel, ere we sleep?
TYR. Ye shall, my lord. [*Exit.*

Re-enter BUCKINGHAM

BUCK. My lord, I have consider'd in my mind
The late demand that you did sound me in.
K. RICH. Well, let that pass. Dorset is fled to Richmond.
BUCK. I hear that news, my lord.
K. RICH. Stanley, he is your wife's son: well, look to it.
BUCK. My lord, I claim your gift, my due by promise,
For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd;
The earldom of Hereford and the moveables
The which you promised I should possess.

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76 *deal upon*] deal with.

85–86 *Shall . . . my lord*] Thus the Quartos. These lines are omitted from the Folios.

K. Rich. Stanley, look to your wife: if she convey
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.
Buck. What says your highness to my just demand?
K. Rich. As I remember, Henry the Sixth
Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
A king, perhaps, perhaps, —
Buck. My lord!
K. Rich. How chance the prophet could not at that time
Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?
Buck. My lord, your promise for the earldom, —
K. Rich. Richmond! When last I was at Exeter,
The mayor in courtesy show'd me the castle,
And call'd it Rougemont: at which name I started,
Because a bard of Ireland told me once,
I should not live long after I saw Richmond.
Buck. My lord!
K. Rich. Ay, what's o'clock?
Buck. I am thus bold to put your grace in mind
Of what you promised me.
K. Rich. Well, but what's o'clock?
Buck. Upon the stroke of ten.
K. Rich. Well, let it strike.
Buck. Why let it strike?
K. Rich. Because that, like a Jack, thou keep'st the stroke

103–120 *My lord! . . . to-day*] Thus the Quartos. The whole passage is omitted from the Folios.

118 *a Jack*] a small mechanical figure which struck the hour on the bell of a clock. Cf. *Rich. II*, V, v, 60: "*Jack* o' the clock." The king

Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.
I am not in the giving vein to-day.
BUCK. Why, then resolve me whether you will or no.
K. RICH. Tut, tut,
Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein.
[*Exeunt all but Buckingham.*
BUCK. Is it even so? rewards he my true service
With such deep contempt? made I him king for this?
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone
To Brecknock, while my fearful head is on! [*Exit.*

SCENE III — THE SAME

Enter TYRREL

TYR. The tyrannous and bloody deed is done,
The most arch act of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.
Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn
To do this ruthless piece of butchery,
Although they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,
Melting with tenderness and kind compassion

impatiently complains that Buckingham's noisy importunity combines with his own preoccupation to put out of gear the striking apparatus of the clock, and thereby keeps the precise hour from being known; the duke's importunate petitions, and Richard's own absorption in thought, between them obstruct the passage of time.

127 *Brecknock*] Brecknock Castle, in South Wales, was one of the Duke of Buckingham's residences.

2 *arch*] consummate, notable.

6 *flesh'd*] inured to bloodshed. The term is often applied to trained hunting dogs.

Wept like two children in their deaths' sad stories.
"Lo, thus," quoth Dighton, "lay those tender babes:"
"Thus, thus," quoth Forrest, "girdling one another
Within their innocent alabaster arms:
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
Which in their summer beauty kiss'd each other.
A book of prayers on their pillow lay;
Which once," quoth Forrest, "almost changed my mind;
But O! the devil" — there the villain stopp'd;
Whilst Dighton thus told on: "We smothered
The most replenished sweet work of nature
That from the prime creation e'er she framed."
Thus both are gone with conscience and remorse;
They could not speak; and so I left them both,
To bring this tidings to the bloody king.
And here he comes.

Enter KING RICHARD

All hail, my sovereign liege!

K. RICH. Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

TYR. If to have done the thing you gave in charge
Beget your happiness, be happy then,
For it is done, my lord.

K. RICH. But didst thou see them dead?

TYR. I did, my lord.

K. RICH. And buried, gentle Tyrrel?

TYR. The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them;
But how or in what place I do not know.

18 *replenished*] complete, perfect. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, II, i, 79: "*replenish'd* villain."

K. Rich. Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at after supper,
And thou shalt tell the process of their death.
Meantime, but think how I may do thee good,
And be inheritor of thy desire.
Farewell till soon. [*Exit Tyrrel.*
The son of Clarence have I pent up close;
His daughter meanly have I match'd in marriage;
The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,
And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night.
Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims
At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
And, by that knot, looks proudly o'er the crown,
To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer.

Enter Catesby

Cate. My lord!
K. Rich. Good news or bad, that thou comest in so bluntly?

31 *soon at after supper*] about the time when supper is over. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *soone, and after supper*. "Soon at" is constantly found in Shakespeare in the sense of "about" or "near." Cf. *Com. of Errors*, I, ii, 26: "*Soon at* five o'clock; *ibid*, III, ii, 172: "*soon at* supper-time." "After-supper" (with the two words hyphened) means a slight meal following the full supper (cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 34), but it is doubtful if that be quite the intention of the words here.

37 *His . . . marriage*] Clarence's daughter Margaret was married to Sir Richard Pole, who was of somewhat better birth than the text indicates. Contrary to the statement of the text, the union took place about 1491, some years after Richard's death, by direction of Henry VII.

40 *Breton Richmond*] The Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII, had long found refuge at the court of the Duke of Bretagne (Brittany).

CATE. Bad news, my lord: Ely is fled to Richmond;
And Buckingham, back'd with the hardy Welshmen,
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

K. RICH. Ely with Richmond troubles me more near
Than Buckingham and his rash-levied army.
Come, I have heard that fearful commenting
Is leaden servitor to dull delay;
Delay leads impotent and snail-paced beggary:
Then fiery expedition be my wing,
Jove's Mercury, and herald for a king!
Come, muster men: my counsel is my shield;
We must be brief when traitors brave the field.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — BEFORE THE PALACE

Enter QUEEN MARGARET

Q. MAR. So, now prosperity begins to mellow
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.
Here in these confines slily have I lurk'd,
To watch the waning of mine adversaries.

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46 *Ely*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *Mourton*. The reference is to John Morton, Bishop of Ely, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, by the appointment of Henry VII.

51–53 *fearful . . . beggary*] timorous reflection renders heavy-footed aid to, or serves the slow purpose of, sluggish procrastination; procrastination superinduces feeble and creeping beggary.

54 *fiery expedition*] rapidity of fire or lightning.

55 *Jove's Mercury*] The swift messenger of Jove.

57 *brave the field*] vauntingly challenge (us) to the battlefield.

A dire induction am I witness to,
And will to France, hoping the consequence
Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret: who comes here?

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH *and the* DUCHESS OF YORK

Q. ELIZ. Ah, my young princes! ah, my tender babes!
My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets!
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air,
And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,
Hover about me with your airy wings,
And hear your mother's lamentation!

Q. MAR. Hover about her; say, that right for right
Hath dimm'd your infant morn to aged night.

DUCH. So many miseries have crazed my voice,
That my woe-wearied tongue is mute and dumb.
Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

Q. MAR. Plantagenet doth quit Plantagenet,
Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.

Q. ELIZ. Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs,

---

5 *induction*] preparation, prelude. Cf. I, i, 32, *supra*: "*inductions* dangerous."

15–16 *right for right . . . night*] supreme right, justice answering the claims of justice, has dimmed or blotted out the bright dawn of your infant's life and put in its place the darkness of death, which commonly awaits old age. The losses which Queen Margaret has suffered cause her to regard Queen Elizabeth's bereavement as just retribution for the removal of her own kindred. Cf. lines 20–21, and 63–70, *infra*.

20 *quit*] requite.

And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?
When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?
Q. MAR. When holy Harry died, and my sweet son.
DUCH. Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost,
Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurp'd,
Brief abstract and record of tedious days,
Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth, [*Sitting down.*
Unlawfully made drunk with innocents' blood!
Q. ELIZ. O, that thou wouldst as well afford a grave
As thou canst yield a melancholy seat!
Then would I hide my bones, not rest them here.
O, who hath any cause to mourn but I?
[*Sitting down by her.*
Q. MAR. If ancient sorrow be most reverend,
Give mine the benefit of seniory,
And let my woes frown on the upper hand.
If sorrow can admit society, [*Sitting down with them.*
Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine:
I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard kill'd him.
DUCH. I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;
I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.
Q. MAR. Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard kill'd him.

35 *ancient sorrow*] sorrow of age.
36 *seniory*] seniority.

From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,
To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,
That foul defacer of God's handiwork,
That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,
Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.
O upright, just, and true-disposing God,
How do I thank thee, that this carnal cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body,
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan!

DUCH. O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

Q. MAR. Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,
And now I cloy me with beholding it.
Thy Edward he is dead, that stabb'd my Edward;
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;
Young York he is but boot, because both they
Match not the high perfection of my loss:
Thy Clarence he is dead that kill'd my Edward;
And the beholders of this tragic play,

---

49 *dog . . . teeth*] Richard was reported to have been born with teeth. Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, V, vi, 74–75, where Richard tells how "The midwife wonder'd and the women cried 'O, Jesus bless us, *he is born with teeth!*'"

56 *carnal*] flesh-consuming, cannibal.

58 *pew-fellow*] companion, comrade, partner.

65 *boot*] a mere trifle (thrown in by a vendor to recommend a purchase). Cf. *Wint. Tale*, IV, iv, 665: "What an exchange had this been without *boot!*"

The adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
Only reserved their factor, to buy souls
And send them thither: but at hand, at hand,
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray,
To have him suddenly convey'd away.
Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,
That I may live to say, The dog is dead!

Q. ELIZ. O, thou didst prophesy the time would come
That I should wish for thee to help me curse
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad!

Q. MAR. I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;
I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;
The presentation of but what I was;
The flattering index of a direful pageant;
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;
A mother only mock'd with two sweet babes;
A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,
A sign of dignity, a garish flag
To be the aim of every dangerous shot;

---

69 *adulterate*] adulterous; cf. III, i, 185, and III, v, 31, *supra.*

71 *intelligencer*] agent, emissary, informer.

72 *their*] in agreement with "hell," signifying a community of evil spirits.

85 *index*] prelude. Cf. II, ii, 148, *supra:* "As *index* to the story," and IV, iv, 5: "A dire *induction.*" "The index of a pageant" may be the gaudily painted cloth, indicating the general intention of the entertainment, which was sometimes exhibited at the opening of a pageant.

A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.
Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?
Where are thy children? wherein dost thou joy?
Who sues to thee, and cries "God save the queen"?
Where be the bending peers that flattered thee?
Where be the thronging troops that followed thee?
Decline all this, and see what now thou art:
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;
For queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;
For one being sued to, one that humbly sues;
For one that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;
For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;
For one commanding all, obey'd of none.
Thus hath the course of justice wheel'd about,
And left thee but a very prey to time;
Having no more but thought of what thou wert,
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.
Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?
Now thy proud neck bears half my burthen'd yoke;
From which even here I slip my weary neck,
And leave the burthen of it all on thee.
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance:
These English woes will make me smile in France.

Q. Eliz. O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

---

97 *Decline all this*] Go through all this (as through the declension of a verb or noun in a grammar book).

105 *wheel'd*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *whirl'd*.

Q. Mar. Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;
Compare dead happiness with living woe;
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,
And he that slew them fouler than he is:
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:
Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

Q. Eliz. My words are dull; O, quicken them with thine!

Q. Mar. Thy woes will make them sharp and pierce like mine. [*Exit.*

Duch. Why should calamity be full of words?

Q. Eliz. Windy attorneys to their client woes,
Airy succeeders of intestate joys,
Poor breathing orators of miseries!
Let them have scope: though what they do impart
Help not at all, yet do they ease the heart.

Duch. If so, then be not tongue-tied: go with me,
And in the breath of bitter words let 's smother
My damned son, which thy two sweet sons smother'd.
I hear his drum: be copious in exclaims.

Enter King Richard, *marching, with drums and trumpets*

K. Rich. Who intercepts my expedition?

Duch. O, she that might have intercepted thee,

---

122 *Bettering thy loss*] Exaggeration of thy loss.

127 *Windy attorneys*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 335–336: "But when the heart's *attorney* [*i. e.*, the tongue] once is mute, The *client* [*i. e.*, the heart] breaks, as desperate in his suit." Here "words" are insubstantial, wind-begotten "attorneys," and "woes" the clients.

128 *Airy succeeders of intestate joys*] Breath-born heirs or inheritors of poor joys, which (with nothing to bequeath) have made no will.

By strangling thee in her accursed womb,
From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done!
Q. Eliz. Hidest thou that forehead with a golden crown,
Where should be graven, if that right were right,
The slaughter of the prince that owed that crown,
And the dire death of my two sons and brothers?
Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?
Duch. Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?
And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?
Q. Eliz. Where is kind Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey?
K. Rich. A flourish, trumpets! strike alarum, drums!
Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women
Rail on the Lord's anointed: strike, I say!
[*Flourish. Alarums.*
Either be patient, and entreat me fair,
Or with the clamorous report of war
Thus will I drown your exclamations.
Duch. Art thou my son?
K. Rich. Ay, I thank God, my father, and yourself.
Duch. Then patiently hear my impatience.
K. Rich. Madam, I have a touch of your condition,
Which cannot brook the accent of reproof.
Duch. O, let me speak!
K. Rich. Do then; but I'll not hear.
Duch. I will be mild and gentle in my speech.

151 *entreat*] treat, use.
157 *a touch of your condition*] a dash of your temperament.

K. Rich. And brief, good mother; for I am in haste.
Duch. Art thou so hasty? I have stay'd for thee,
God knows, in anguish, pain and agony.
K. Rich. And came I not at last to comfort you?
Duch. No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well,
Thou camest on earth to make the earth my hell.
A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;
Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious,
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous,
Thy age confirm'd, proud, subtle, bloody, treacherous;
More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred:
What comfortable hour canst thou name,
That ever graced me in thy company?
K. Rich. Faith, none, but Humphrey Hour, that
call'd your grace

168 *Tetchy*] fretful, peevish.
169 *frightful*] causing fright.
171 *Thy age confirm'd*] Thy ripened age.
172 *harmful, kind*] Sidney Walker's proposal to hyphen these words is worth adopting.
175–176 *Humphrey Hour . . . company*] No explanation of these words seems quite satisfactory. The reference is probably to the hour when the Duchess gave birth to Richard, and to the first meal which she took after her delivery. According to homely wit, the mother was then said to breakfast apart from the child whom she had hitherto fed in her womb along with herself. "Humphrey Hour," a jocose personification of "hour," quibblingly recalls the slang phrase "to dine with Duke Humphrey [of Gloucester]," *i. e.*, to go hungry, to go without one's dinner. "Humphrey Hour" thus might mean the hour when one goes hungry and is ready to eat. There is a crude appropriateness to the context in an allusion

To breakfast once forth of my company.
If I be so disgracious in your sight,
Let me march on, and not offend your grace.
Strike up the drum.
DUCH. I prithee, hear me speak.
K. RICH. You speak too bitterly.
DUCH. Hear me a word;
For I shall never speak to thee again.
K. RICH. So.
DUCH. Either thou wilt die, by God's just ordinance,
Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror,
Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish
And never look upon thy face again.
Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse;
Which, in the day of battle, tire thee more
Than all the complete armour that thou wear'st!
My prayers on the adverse party fight;
And there the little souls of Edward's children
Whisper the spirits of thine enemies,
And promise them success and victory.
Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend. [*Exit.*
Q. ELIZ. Though far more cause, yet much less spirit to curse
Abides in me; I say amen to all.
K. RICH. Stay, madam; I must speak a word with you.
Q. ELIZ. I have no moe sons of the royal blood

---

to the slang phrase, seeing that its hero "Duke Humphrey" was like the Duchess' son, a Duke of Gloucester.

For thee to murder: for my daughters, Richard,
They shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens;
And therefore level not to hit their lives.
K. RICH. You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth,
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.
Q. ELIZ. And must she die for this? O, let her live,
And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty;
Slander myself as false to Edward's bed;
Throw over her the veil of infamy:
So she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.
K. RICH. Wrong not her birth, she is of royal blood.
Q. ELIZ. To save her life, I'll say she is not so.
K. RICH. Her life is only safest in her birth.
Q. ELIZ. And only in that safety died her brothers.
K. RICH. Lo, at their births good stars were opposite.
Q. ELIZ. No, to their lives bad friends were contrary.
K. RICH. All unavoided is the doom of destiny.
Q. ELIZ. True, when avoided grace makes destiny:
My babes were destined to a fairer death,
If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.
K. RICH. You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.
Q. ELIZ. Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.
Whose hand soever lanced their tender hearts,

---

215 *opposite*] hostile, in opposition; an astrological term. Cf. line 402, *infra:* "Be *opposite* all planets of good luck."

217 *unavoided*] unavoidable.

221–222 *cousins . . . cozen'd*] a quibble very characteristic of Shakespeare's early manner.

Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:
No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt,
Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.
But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,
My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys,
Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;
And I, in such a desperate bay of death,
Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,
Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

K. Rich. Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise,
And dangerous success of bloody wars,
As I intend more good to you and yours,
Than ever you or yours were by me wrong'd!

Q. Eliz. What good is cover'd with the face of heaven,
To be discover'd, that can do me good?

K. Rich. The advancement of your children, gentle lady.

Q. Eliz. Up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads?

K. Rich. No, to the dignity and height of honour,
The high imperial type of this earth's glory.

Q. Eliz. Flatter my sorrows with report of it;
Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,
Canst thou demise to any child of mine?

---

225 *indirectly*] wickedly, disingenuously.
229 *still use*] continual use. Cf. *Tit. Andr.*, III, ii, 45: "And by *still* practice learn to know thy meaning."
236 *dangerous success*] hazardous issues.
244 *type*] symbol, emblem, crown.

K. Rich. Even all I have; yea, and myself and all,
Will I withal endow a child of thine;
So in the Lethe of thy angry soul
Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs,
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.
Q. Eliz. Be brief, lest that the process of thy kindness
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.
K. Rich. Then know, that from my soul I love thy daughter.
Q. Eliz. My daughter's mother thinks it with her soul.
K. Rich. What do you think?
Q. Eliz. That thou dost love my daughter from thy soul:
So from thy soul's love didst thou love her brothers;
And from my heart's love I do thank thee for it.
K. Rich. Be not so hasty to confound my meaning:
I mean, that with my soul I love thy daughter,
And mean to make her queen of England.
Q. Eliz. Say then, who dost thou mean shall be her king?
K. Rich. Even he that makes her queen: who should be else?
Q. Eliz. What, thou?
K. Rich. I, even I: what think you of it, madam?

---

258 *from thy soul*] The speaker quibbles on the meaning of the preposition "from," which she uses here and in the two succeeding lines in the sense of "away from," "outside of," "unconcerned with." Richard has just said that he loved Queen Elizabeth's daughter "from my soul" (*i. e.*, from the depths of his soul). Richard's phrase "from my soul" is given quite the contrary interpretation by Queen Elizabeth.

Q. Eliz. How canst thou woo her?
K. Rich. That would I learn of you,
As one that are best acquainted with her humour.
Q. Eliz. And wilt thou learn of me?
K. Rich. Madam, with all my heart.
Q. Eliz. Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,
A pair of bleeding hearts; thereon engrave
Edward and York; then haply she will weep:
Therefore present to her, — as sometime Margaret
Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood, —
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain
The purple sap from her sweet brother's body,
And bid her dry her weeping eyes therewith.
If this inducement force her not to love,
Send her a story of thy noble acts;
Tell her thou madest away her uncle Clarence,
Her uncle Rivers; yea, and, for her sake,
Madest quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.
K. Rich. Come, come, you mock me; this is not the way
To win your daughter.
Q. Eliz. There is no other way;
Unless thou couldst put on some other shape,
And not be Richard that hath done all this.
K. Rich. Say that I did all this for love of her.
Q. Eliz. Nay, then indeed she cannot choose but hate thee,
Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.
K. Rich. Look, what is done cannot be now amended:

Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,
Which after-hours give leisure to repent.
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,
To make amends, I'll give it to your daughter.
If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,
To quicken your increase, I will beget
Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter:
A grandam's name is little less in love
Than is the doting title of a mother;
They are as children but one step below,
Even of your mettle, of your very blood;
Of all one pain, save for a night of groans
Endured of her, for whom you bid like sorrow.
Your children were vexation to your youth,
But mine shall be a comfort to your age.
The loss you have is but a son being king,
And by that loss your daughter is made queen.
I cannot make you what amends I would,
Therefore accept such kindness as I can.
Dorset your son, that with a fearful soul
Leads discontented steps in foreign soil,
This fair alliance quickly shall call home
To high promotions and great dignity:
The king, that calls your beauteous daughter wife,
Familiarly shall call thy Dorset brother;
Again shall you be mother to a king,
And all the ruins of distressful times
Repair'd with double riches of content.

304 *Endured . . . sorrow*] Endured by her for whom you suffered like grief.

What! we have many goodly days to see:
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed
Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl,
Advantaging their loan with interest
Of ten times double gain of happiness.
Go then, my mother, to thy daughter go;
Make bold her bashful years with your experience;
Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale;
Put in her tender heart the aspiring flame
Of golden sovereignty; acquaint the princess
With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys:
And when this arm of mine hath chastised
The petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come,
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed;
To whom I will retail my conquest won,
And she shall be sole victress, Cæsar's Cæsar.

Q. Eliz. What were I best to say? her father's brother
Would be her lord? or shall I say, her uncle?
Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?
Under what title shall I woo for thee,
That God, the law, my honour and her love,
Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

K. Rich. Infer fair England's peace by this alliance.

Q. Eliz. Which she shall purchase with still lasting war.

322 *orient pearl*] Cf. *Two Gent.*, III, i, 224: "A sea of melting *pearl*, which some call *tears*."

323 *Advantaging*] Increasing; *loan* is Theobald's emendation of *Love*, the reading of the original editions.

343 *Infer*] Allege. Cf. III, v, 75, *supra*, and note.

K. Rich. Say that the king, which may command, entreats.
Q. Eliz. That at her hands which the king's King forbids.
K. Rich. Say, she shall be a high and mighty queen.
Q. Eliz. To wail the title, as her mother doth.
K. Rich. Say, I will love her everlastingly.
Q. Eliz. But how long shall that title "ever" last?
K. Rich. Sweetly in force unto her fair life's end.
Q. Eliz. But how long fairly shall her sweet life last?
K. Rich. So long as heaven and nature lengthens it.
Q. Eliz. So long as hell and Richard likes of it.
K. Rich. Say, I, her sovereign, am her subject love.
Q. Eliz. But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.
K. Rich. Be eloquent in my behalf to her.
Q. Eliz. An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.
K. Rich. Then in plain terms tell her my loving tale.
Q. Eliz. Plain and not honest is too harsh a style.
K. Rich. Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.
Q. Eliz. O no, my reasons are too deep and dead;
Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their grave.
K. Rich. Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

361–362 *quick . . . dead*] Richard uses "quick" in its ordinary sense of "rapid," "nimble." Queen Elizabeth quibblingly takes it in the sense of "alive," of which "dead" is the negative.

Q. Eliz. Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break.
K. Rich. Now, by my George, my garter, and my crown, —
Q. Eliz. Profaned, dishonour'd, and the third usurp'd.
K. Rich. I swear —
Q. Eliz. By nothing; for this is no oath:
The George, profaned, hath lost his holy honour;
The garter, blemish'd, pawn'd his knightly virtue;
The crown, usurp'd, disgraced his kingly glory.
If something thou wilt swear to be believed,
Swear then by something that thou hast not wrong'd.
K. Rich. Now, by the world —
Q. Eliz. 'T is full of thy foul wrongs.
K. Rich. My father's death —
Q. Eliz. Thy life hath that dishonour'd.
K. Rich. Then, by myself —
Q. Eliz. Thyself thyself misusest.
K. Rich. Why then, by God —
Q. Eliz. God's wrong is most of all.
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
The unity the king thy brother made
Had not been broken, nor my brother slain:
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,
The imperial metal, circling now thy brow,
Had graced the tender temples of my child,
And both the princes had been breathing here,

366 *George*] A jewel in the shape of a figure of England's patron saint, which formed part of the insignia of the order of the garter.

Which now, two tender playfellows for dust,
Thy broken faith hath made a prey for worms.
What canst thou swear by now?
K. Rich. The time to come.
Q. Eliz. That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast;
For I myself have many tears to wash
Hereafter time, for time past wrong'd by thee.
The children live, whose parents thou hast slaughter'd,
Ungovern'd youth, to wail it in their age;
The parents live, whose children thou hast butcher'd,
Old withered plants, to wail it with their age.
Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast
Misused ere used, by time misused o'erpast.
K. Rich. As I intend to prosper and repent,
So thrive I in my dangerous attempt
Of hostile arms! myself myself confound!
Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours!
Day, yield me not thy light; nor, night, thy rest!
Be opposite all planets of good luck
To my proceedings, if, with pure heart's love,
Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,
I tender not thy beauteous princely daughter!
In her consists my happiness and thine;
Without her, follows to this land and me,

390 *Hereafter time*] To the future.
395–396 *for that . . . o'erpast*] for thou hast misused the future before it was at your disposal, by virtue of the misuse to which you have put the time that is over and past.
400 *Heaven . . . hours*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos omit the line.
402 *opposite*] hostile. See note on line 215, *supra*.

To thee, herself, and many a Christian soul,
Death, desolation, ruin and decay:
It cannot be avoided but by this;
It will not be avoided but by this.
Therefore, good mother, — I must call you so —
Be the attorney of my love to her:
Plead what I will be, not what I have been;
Not my deserts, but what I will deserve:
Urge the necessity and state of times,
And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

Q. Eliz. Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

K. Rich. Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

Q. Eliz. Shall I forget myself to be myself?

K. Rich. Ay, if yourself's remembrance wrong yourself.

Q. Eliz. But thou didst kill my children.

K. Rich. But in your daughter's womb I bury them:
Where in that nest of spicery they shall breed
Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.

Q. Eliz. Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

K. Rich. And be a happy mother by the deed.

---

417 *peevish-fond*] Malone first suggested that the word should be hyphened. The sense is "perversely stupid."

424 *nest of spicery*] an allusion to the fable of the phœnix, which was consumed every thousand years on a funeral pyre of spices on which the bird was at the same time reincarnated.

425 *recomforture*] comfort, consolation. The word is not found elsewhere, though Spenser uses "recomfortless" (*Faerie Queene*, V, vi, 24), and the verb "recomfort" in the sense of "console" is common in mediæval and Elizabethan literature.

Q. ELIZ. I go. Write to me very shortly,
And you shall understand from me her mind.
K. RICH. Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell. [*Exit Queen Elizabeth.*
Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!

Enter RATCLIFF; CATESBY *following*

How now! what news?
RAT. My gracious sovereign, on the western coast
Rideth a puissant navy; to the shore
Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted friends,
Unarm'd, and unresolved to beat them back:
'T is thought that Richmond is their admiral;
And there they hull, expecting but the aid
Of Buckingham to welcome them ashore.
K. RICH. Some light-foot friend post to the Duke of Norfolk:
Ratcliff, thyself, or Catesby; where is he?
CATE. Here, my lord.
K. RICH. Fly to the duke. [*To Ratcliff*] Post thou to Salisbury:
When thou comest thither, — [*To Catesby*] Dull unmindful villain,
Why stand'st thou still, and go'st not to the duke?
CATE. First, mighty sovereign, let me know your mind,
What from your grace I shall deliver to him.
K. RICH. O, true, good Catesby: bid him levy straight

438 *hull*] lay to, lie a-hull.

The greatest strength and power he can make,
And meet me presently at Salisbury.
CATE. I go. [*Exit.*
RAT. What is 't your highness' pleasure I shall do
At Salisbury?
K. RICH. Why, what wouldst thou do there before I go?
RAT. Your highness told me I should post before.
K. RICH. My mind is changed, sir, my mind is changed.

Enter LORD STANLEY

How now, what news with you?
STAN. None good, my lord, to please you with the hearing;
Nor none so bad, but it may well be told.
K. RICH. Hoyday, a riddle! neither good nor bad!
Why dost thou run so many mile about,
When thou mayst tell thy tale a nearer way?
Once more, what news?
STAN. Richmond is on the seas.
K. RICH. There let him sink, and be the seas on him!
White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?
STAN. I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.
K. RICH. Well, sir, as you guess, as you guess?
STAN. Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,
He makes for England, there to claim the crown.

---

450 *presently*] immediately. Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *suddenly*.
465 *White-liver'd runagate*] Cowardly runaway. Cf. V, iii, 316, *infra*.

K. Rich. Is the chair empty? is the sword unsway'd?
Is the king dead? the empire unpossess'd?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?
Then, tell me, what doth he upon the sea?
Stan. Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.
K. Rich. Unless for that he comes to be your liege,
You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.
Thou wilt revolt and fly to him, I fear.
Stan. No, mighty liege; therefore mistrust me not.
K. Rich. Where is thy power then to beat him back?
Where are thy tenants and thy followers?
Are they not now upon the western shore,
Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships?
Stan. No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.
K. Rich. Cold friends to Richard: what do they in the north,
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?
Stan. They have not been commanded, mighty sovereign:
Please it your majesty to give me leave,
I'll muster up my friends, and meet your grace
Where and what time your majesty shall please.
K. Rich. Ay, ay, thou wouldst be gone to join with Richmond:
I will not trust you, sir.
Stan. Most mighty sovereign,
You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful:
I never was nor never will be false.

K. Rich. Well,
Go muster men; but, hear you, leave behind
Your son, George Stanley: look your faith be firm,
Or else his head's assurance is but frail.
Stan. So deal with him as I prove true to you. [*Exit.*

Enter a Messenger

Mess. My gracious sovereign, now in Devonshire,
As I by friends am well advertised,
Sir Edward Courtney, and the haughty prelate
Bishop of Exeter, his brother there,
With many moe confederates, are in arms.

Enter another Messenger

Sec. Mess. My liege, in Kent, the Guildfords are in arms;
And every hour more competitors
Flock to their aid, and still their power increaseth.

Enter another Messenger

Third Mess. My lord, the army of the Duke of Buckingham —

501 *advertised*] informed, notified. The accents fall on the second and fourth syllables.

503 *brother there*] Thus the Quartos. The Folios read *elder Brother*. Peter Courtney, the Bishop of Exeter, was cousin, *not* brother, of Sir Edward Courtney.

506 *competitors*] confederates, associates. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, vi, 35: "Myself in counsel, his *competitor*."

K. Rich. Out on you, owls! nothing but songs of death? [*He striketh him.*
Take that, until thou bring me better news.
Third Mess. The news I have to tell your majesty
Is, that by sudden floods and fall of waters,
Buckingham's army is dispersed and scatter'd;
And he himself wander'd away alone,
No man knows whither.
K. Rich. I cry thee mercy:
There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.
Hath any well-advised friend proclaim'd
Reward to him that brings the traitor in?
Third Mess. Such proclamation hath been made, my liege.

Enter another Messenger

Fourth Mess. Sir Thomas Lovel and Lord Marquess Dorset,
'T is said, my liege, in Yorkshire are in arms.
Yet this good comfort bring I to your grace,
The Breton navy is dispersed by tempest:
Richmond, in Dorsetshire, sent out a boat
Unto the shore, to ask those on the banks
If they were his assistants, yea or no;
Who answer'd him, they came from Buckingham
Upon his party: he, mistrusting them,
Hoised sail and made away for Brittany.
K. Rich. March on, march on, since we are up in arms;

528 *Upon his party*] To join his party, to take his side.

If not to fight with foreign enemies,
Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.

Re-enter CATESBY

CATE. My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken;
That is the best news: that the Earl of Richmond
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford,
Is colder tidings, yet they must be told.

K. RICH. Away towards Salisbury! while we reason here,
A royal battle might be won and lost:
Some one take order Buckingham be brought
To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE V — LORD DERBY'S HOUSE

Enter DERBY *and* SIR CHRISTOPHER URSWICK

DER. Sir Christopher, tell Richmond this from me:
That in the sty of this most bloody boar
My son George Stanley is frank'd up in hold:

---

539 *take order*] take measures, arrange. Cf. IV, ii, 54, *supra*.

SCENE V] The text of this scene follows the Quartos, in which the Folios introduce many changes.

1 *Sir Christopher (Urswick)*] A priest in the service of the Countess of Richmond, and employed by her in confidential communication with her son. For the title of "Sir" applied to priests see note on III, ii, 111, *supra*.

3 *frank'd up*] cooped up, confined. Cf. I, iii, 314, *supra*, and note.

If I revolt, off goes young George's head;
The fear of that withholds my present aid.
But, tell me, where is princely Richmond now?
CHRIS. At Pembroke, or at Ha'rford-west, in Wales.
DER. What men of name resort to him?
CHRIS. Sir Walter Herbert, a renowned soldier;
Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley;
Oxford, redoubted Pembroke, Sir James Blunt,
And Rice ap Thomas, with a valiant crew,
And many moe of noble fame and worth:
And towards London they do bend their course,
If by the way they be not fought withal.
DER. Return unto thy lord; commend me to him:
Tell him the queen hath heartily consented
He shall espouse Elizabeth her daughter.
These letters will resolve him of my mind.
Farewell. [*Exeunt.*

7 *Ha'rford-west*] Haverfordwest, on the coast of Pembrokeshire.
19 *resolve*] inform, satisfy. Cf. IV, ii, 26, *supra*.

ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — SALISBURY

AN OPEN PLACE

Enter the Sheriff, *and* BUCKINGHAM, *with halberds, led to execution*

BUCKINGHAM

ILL NOT KING RICHARD let me speak with him?

SHER. No, my good lord; therefore be patient.

BUCK. Hastings, and Edward's children, Rivers, Grey,
Holy King Henry, and thy fair son Edward,
Vaughan, and all that have miscarried
By underhand corrupted foul injustice,
If that your moody discontented souls
Do through the clouds behold this present hour,
Even for revenge mock my destruction!
This is All-Souls' day, fellows, is it not?

SHER. It is, my lord.
BUCK. Why, then All-Souls' day is my body's doomsday.
This is the day that, in King Edward's time,
I wish'd might fall on me when I was found
False to his children or his wife's allies;
This is the day wherein I wish'd to fall
By the false faith of him I trusted most;
This, this All-Souls' day to my fearful soul
Is the determined respite of my wrongs:
That high All-seer that I dallied with
Hath turn'd my feigned prayer on my head,
And given in earnest what I begg'd in jest.
Thus doth he force the swords of wicked men
To turn their own points on their masters' bosoms:
Now Margaret's curse is fallen upon my head;
"When he," quoth she, "shall split thy heart with sorrow,
Remember Margaret was a prophetess."
Come, sirs, convey me to the block of shame;
Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame.
[*Exeunt.*

12 *All-Souls' day*] November 2 was the festival day appointed by the Roman Catholic Church in honour of the souls of all the dead.
doomsday] the day of death.
19 *determined . . . wrongs*] the term or close of the period to which the punishment of my offences was postponed.

SCENE II — THE CAMP NEAR TAMWORTH

Enter RICHMOND, OXFORD, BLUNT, HERBERT, *and others, with drum and colours*

RICHM. Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,
Thus far into the bowels of the land
Have we march'd on without impediment;
And here receive we from our father Stanley
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.
The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,
That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough
In your embowell'd bosoms, this foul swine
Lies now even in the centre of this isle,
Near to the town of Leicester, as we learn:
From Tamworth thither is but one day's march.
In God's name, cheerly on, courageous friends,
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace
By this one bloody trial of sharp war.

OXF. Every man's conscience is a thousand swords,
To fight against that bloody homicide.

HERB. I doubt not but his friends will fly to us.

BLUNT. He hath no friends but who are friends for fear,
Which in his greatest need will shrink from him.

9 *Swills . . . like wash*] Drinks . . . as a boar sucks up hogwash.
10 *embowell'd*] ripped up, disembowelled.
11 *Lies*] Sojourns.

RICHM. All for our vantage. Then, in God's name, march:
True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings;
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III — BOSWORTH FIELD

Enter KING RICHARD *in arms with* NORFOLK, *the* EARL OF SURREY, *and others*

K. RICH. Here pitch our tents, even here in Bosworth field.
My Lord of Surrey, why look you so sad?
SUR. My heart is ten times lighter than my looks.
K. RICH. My Lord of Norfolk, —
NOR. Here, most gracious liege.
K. RICH. Norfolk, we must have knocks; ha! must we not?
NOR. We must both give and take, my gracious lord.
K. RICH. Up with my tent there! here will I lie to-night:
But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.
Who hath descried the number of the foe?
NOR. Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.
K. RICH. Why, our battalion trebles that account:
Besides, the king's name is a tower of strength,
Which they upon the adverse party want.
Up with my tent there! Valiant gentlemen,
Let us survey the vantage of the field;

Call for some men of sound direction:
Let's want no discipline, make no delay;
For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day. [*Exeunt.*

Enter, on the other side of the field, RICHMOND, SIR WILLIAM BRANDON, OXFORD, *and others. Some of the* Soldiers *pitch Richmond's tent*

RICHM. The weary sun hath made a golden set,
And by the bright track of his fiery car
Gives signal of a goodly day to-morrow.
Sir William Brandon, you shall bear my standard.
Give me some ink and paper in my tent:
I'll draw the form and model of our battle,
Limit each leader to his several charge,
And part in just proportion our small strength.
My Lord of Oxford, you, Sir William Brandon,
And you, Sir Walter Herbert, stay with me.
The Earl of Pembroke keeps his regiment:
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good-night to him,
And by the second hour in the morning
Desire the earl to see me in my tent:
Yet one thing more, good Blunt, before thou go'st,
Where is Lord Stanley quarter'd, dost thou know?
BLUNT. Unless I have mista'en his colours much,
Which well I am assured I have not done,
His regiment lies half a mile at least
South from the mighty power of the king.
RICHM. If without peril it be possible,

16 *sound direction*] true judgment, tried skill in leadership.
29 *keeps*] remains with.

Good Captain Blunt, bear my good-night to him,
And give him from me this most needful scroll.
BLUNT. Upon my life, my lord, I'll undertake it;
And so, God give you quiet rest to-night!
RICHM. Good night, good Captain Blunt. Come, gentlemen,
Let us consult upon to-morrow's business:
In to our tent! the air is raw and cold.
[*They withdraw into the tent.*

Enter, to his tent, KING RICHARD, NORFOLK, RATCLIFF, CATESBY, *and others*

K. RICH. What is 't o'clock?
CATE. It's supper-time, my lord;
It's nine o'clock.
K. RICH. I will not sup to-night.
Give me some ink and paper.
What, is my beaver easier than it was!
And all my armour laid into my tent?
CATE. It is, my liege; and all things are in readiness.
K. RICH. Good Norfolk, hie thee to thy charge;
Use careful watch, choose trusty sentinels.
NOR. I go, my lord.
K. RICH. Stir with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk. [*Exit.*
NOR. I warrant you, my lord.

48 *nine*] Thus the Folios. The Quartos read *six*, which in ordinary circumstances would be the customary supper hour.

50 *beaver*] properly the part of the helmet that could be drawn up and down over the face, but often used for the helmet itself.

K. Rich. Catesby!
Cate. My lord?
K. Rich. Send out a pursuivant at arms
To Stanley's regiment; bid him bring his power
Before sunrising, lest his son George fall
Into the blind cave of eternal night. [*Exit Catesby.*
Fill me a bowl of wine. Give me a watch.
Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.
Look that my staves be sound, and not too heavy.
Ratcliff!
Rat. My lord?
K. Rich. Saw'st thou the melancholy Lord Northumberland?
Rat. Thomas the Earl of Surrey, and himself,
Much about cock-shut time, from troop to troop
Went through the army, cheering up the soldiers.
K. Rich. So, I am satisfied. Give me a bowl of wine:
I have not that alacrity of spirit,
Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have.
Set it down. Is ink and paper ready?
Rat. It is, my lord.

---

59 *pursuivant at arms*] messenger. Cf. III, ii, 97, *supra.*
63 *watch*] watchlight, candle.
64 *white Surrey*] According to Hall (p. 412), and Holinshed (III, 754), Richard was "mounted on a great white courser." The horse's name was Shakespeare's invention.
65 *staves*] the wooden shafts of the lances.
70 *cock-shut time*] twilight.
73–74 *I have not . . . have*] These words come with small change from Holinshed's *Chronicle.*

K. Rich. Bid my guard watch. Leave me. Ratcliff,
About the mid of night come to my tent,
And help to arm me. Leave me, I say.
[*Exeunt Ratcliff and the other attendants.*

Enter Derby *to* Richmond *in his tent, Lords and others attending*

Der. Fortune and victory sit on thy helm!
Richm. All comfort that the dark night can afford
Be to thy person, noble father-in-law!
Tell me, how fares our loving mother?
Der. I, by attorney, bless thee from thy mother,
Who prays continually for Richmond's good:
So much for that. The silent hours steal on,
And flaky darkness breaks within the east.
In brief, for so the season bids us be,
Prepare thy battle early in the morning,
And put thy fortune to the arbitrement
Of bloody strokes and mortal-staring war.
I, as I may — that which I would I cannot, —
With best advantage will deceive the time,
And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms:
But on thy side I may not be too forward,
Lest, being seen, thy brother, tender George,
Be executed in his father's sight.
Farewell: the leisure and the fearful time

83 *by attorney*] by deputy. Cf. *As You Like It*, IV, i, 83: "die *by attorney*."
86 *flaky darkness*] darkness streaked with light.
90 *mortal-staring*] looking with deadly glance.
97 *leisure*] time at our free disposal, want of leisure. Cf. line 238, *infra*.

Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love,
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
Which so long sunder'd friends should dwell upon:
God give us leisure for these rites of love!
Once more, adieu: be valiant, and speed well!
RICHM. Good lords, conduct him to his regiment:
I'll strive, with troubled thoughts, to take a nap,
Lest leaden slumber peise me down to-morrow,
When I should mount with wings of victory:
Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen.
[*Exeunt all but Richmond.*
O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye;
Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath,
That they may crush down with a heavy fall
The usurping helmets of our adversaries!
Make us thy ministers of chastisement,
That we may praise thee in the victory!
To thee I do commend my watchful soul,
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! [*Sleeps.*

Enter the Ghost of PRINCE EDWARD, *son to* HENRY THE SIXTH

GHOST. [*To Richard*] Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
Think, how thou stab'dst me in my prime of youth

105 *peise*] weigh.

118 GHOST] The disordered dreams of Richard on the eve of battle are noticed very barely in the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed. Shakespeare has greatly elaborated the chroniclers' suggestion.

At Tewksbury: despair, therefore, and die!
[*To Richmond*] Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls
Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf:
King Henry's issue, Richmond, comforts thee.

Enter the Ghost of HENRY THE SIXTH

GHOST. [*To Richard*] When I was mortal, my anointed body
By thee was punched full of deadly holes:
Think on the Tower and me: despair, and die!
Harry the Sixth bids thee despair and die!
[*To Richmond*] Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror!
Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be king,
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep: live, and flourish!

Enter the Ghost of CLARENCE

GHOST. [*To Richard*] Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!
I, that was wash'd to death with fulsome wine,
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betray'd to death.
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!
[*To Richmond*] Thou offspring of the house of Lancaster,
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee:
Good angels guard thy battle! live, and flourish!

---

132 *fulsome wine*] abundance or surfeit of wine.

Enter the Ghosts of RIVERS, GREY, *and* VAUGHAN

GHOST OF R. [*To Richard*] Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,
Rivers, that died at Pomfret! despair, and die!
GHOST OF G. [*To Richard*] Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair!
GHOST OF V. [*To Richard*] Think upon Vaughan, and, with guilty fear,
Let fall thy lance: despair, and die!
ALL. [*To Richmond*] Awake, and think our wrongs in Richard's bosom
Will conquer him! awake, and win the day!

Enter the Ghost of HASTINGS

GHOST. [*To Richard*] Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake,
And in a bloody battle end thy days!
Think on Lord Hastings: despair, and die!
[*To Richmond*] Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!
Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!

Enter the Ghosts of the two young Princes

GHOSTS. [*To Richard*] Dream on thy cousins smothered in the Tower:
Let us be lead within thy bosom, Richard,
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die!

---

152 *lead*] Thus the First Quarto. All the other early editions read *laid*.

[*To Richmond*] Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and
wake in joy;
Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy!
Live, and beget a happy race of kings!
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

Enter the Ghost of LADY ANNE *his wife*

GHOST. [*To Richard*] Richard, thy wife, that wretched
Anne thy wife,
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations:
To-morrow in the battle think on me,
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!
[*To Richmond*] Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet sleep:
Dream of success and happy victory!
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

Enter the Ghost of BUCKINGHAM

GHOST. [*To Richard*] The first was I that help'd thee
to the crown;
The last was I that felt thy tyranny:
O, in the battle think on Buckingham,
And die in terror of thy guiltiness!
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death:
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath!
[*To Richmond*] I died for hope ere I could lend thee aid:

156 *boar's annoy*] injury from the boar, *i. e.* Richard. Cf. III, ii, 11, *supra.*
173 *for hope*] for lack of hope, in despair. Cf. *Macb.*, I, v, 37, "*dead for* breath," and *As You Like It*, II, iv, 75, "*faints for* succour."

But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismay'd:
God and good angels fight on Richmond's side;
And Richard falls in height of all his pride.

[*The Ghosts vanish. King Richard starts out of his dream.*

K. Rich. Give me another horse: bind up my wounds.
Have mercy, Jesu! — Soft! I did but dream.
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain: yet I lie, I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all used in each degree,

Thus all the early editions. Many emendations have been needlessly suggested.

180 *lights burn blue*] the usual effect of ghostly apparitions.

Throng to the bar, crying all "Guilty! guilty!"
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
And if I die, no soul will pity me:
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

Enter RATCLIFF

RAT. My lord!
K. RICH. 'Zounds! who is there?
RAT. Ratcliff, my lord; 't is I. The early village-cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn;
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.
K. RICH. O Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!
What thinkest thou, will our friends prove all true?
RAT. No doubt, my lord.
K. RICH. O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear, —
RAT. Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.
K. RICH. By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers
Armed in proof, and led by shallow Richmond.
It is not yet near day. Come, go with me;
Under our tents I'll play the eaves-dropper,
To see if any mean to shrink from me. [*Exeunt.*

219 *Armed in proof*] Equipped in proved, tested armour. Cf. *Macb.*, I, ii, 56: "lapped *in proof*."

Enter the Lords *to* Richmond, *sitting in his tent*

Lords. Good morrow, Richmond!
Richm. Cry mercy, lords and watchful gentlemen,
That you have ta'en a tardy sluggard here.
Lords. How have you slept, my lord?
Richm. The sweetest sleep, and fairest-boding dreams
That ever enter'd in a drowsy head,
Have I since your departure had, my lords.
Methought their souls, whose bodies Richard murder'd,
Came to my tent, and cried on victory:
I promise you, my soul is very jocund
In the remembrance of so fair a dream.
How far into the morning is it, lords?
Lords. Upon the stroke of four.
Richm. Why, then 't is time to arm and give direction.

His oration to his soldiers

More than I have said, loving countrymen,
The leisure and enforcement of the time
Forbids to dwell upon: yet remember this,
God and our good cause fight upon our side;
The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,
Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces.

231 *cried on*] called out.
238 *leisure*] time at our free disposal. Cf. line 97, *supra*.

Richard except, those whom we fight against
Had rather have us win than him they follow:
For what is he they follow? truly, gentlemen,
A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
One raised in blood, and one in blood establish'd;
One that made means to come by what he hath,
And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him;
A base foul stone, made precious by the foil
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;
One that hath ever been God's enemy:
Then, if you fight against God's enemy,
God will in justice ward you as his soldiers;
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;
If you do fight against your country's foes,
Your country's fat shall pay your pains the hire;
If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,
Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;
If you do free your children from the sword,
Your children's children quit it in your age.
Then, in the name of God and all these rights,
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords.
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt
Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;

251 *chair . . . set*] throne . . . set, as in a jewel.
254 *ward*] guard, protect.
258 *fat*] wealth.
262 *quit*] requite.
265 *the ransom . . . attempt*] the fine due from me in requital of my boldness.

But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt
The least of you shall share his part thereof.
Sound drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully;
God and Saint George! Richmond and victory!

[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter KING RICHARD, RATCLIFF, *Attendants and Forces*

K. RICH. What said Northumberland as touching Richmond?

RAT. That he was never trained up in arms.

K. RICH. He said the truth: and what said Surrey, then?

RAT. He smiled and said "The better for our purpose."

K. RICH. He was in the right; and so indeed it is.

[*The clock striketh.*

Tell the clock there. Give me a calendar.
Who saw the sun to-day?

RAT. Not I, my lord.

K. RICH. Then he disdains to shine; for by the book
He should have braved the east an hour ago:
A black day will it be to somebody.
Ratcliff!

RAT. My lord?

K. RICH. The sun will not be seen to-day;
The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.
I would these dewy tears were from the ground.
Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me
More than to Richmond? for the selfsame heaven
That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

279 *braved*] made splendid, glorified.

Re-enter NORFOLK

NOR. Arm, arm, my lord; the foe vaunts in the field.

K. RICH. Come, bustle, bustle. Caparison my horse.
Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power:
I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain,
And thus my battle shall be ordered:
My foreward shall be drawn out all in length,
Consisting equally of horse and foot;
Our archers shall be placed in the midst:
John Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Earl of Surrey,
Shall have the leading of this foot and horse.
They thus directed, we will follow
In the main battle, whose puissance on either side
Shall be well winged with our chiefest horse.
This, and Saint George to boot! What think'st thou, Norfolk?

NOR. A good direction, warlike sovereign.
This found I on my tent this morning.

[*He sheweth him a paper.*

K. RICH. [*Reads*] "Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold."

293 *foreward*] vanguard.

301 *This, and Saint George to boot*] This order of battle and the favour of our patron saint in addition.

304–305 "*Jockey of Norfolk . . . bought and sold.*"] This incident and the cited rhyme are taken from the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed. "Dickon" is a colloquial form of Richard; "bought and sold" means "betrayed." Cf. the modern slang "given away."

A thing devised by the enemy.
Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge:
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to 't pell-mell;
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

His oration to his Army

What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?
Remember whom you are to cope withal;
A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,
A scum of Bretons, and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;
You having lands and blest with beauteous wives,
They would restrain the one, distain the other.
And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,
Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost?

314 *inferr'd*] alleged. Cf. III, v, 75, *supra*, and note.

316 *sort*] set, company. Cf. the version of Richard's speech in Holinshed's *Chronicle*, III, 756: "a companie of traitors, theeves, outlaws, and runnagates."

322 *restrain*] put restraint on, withhold from lawful owners. Many modern editors substitute *distrain*.

324 *our mother's*] Thus the early editions. Shakespeare is following Richard's speech as it appears in the *second* edition of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, where Richmond is said to have been "brought up by *my moothers* meanes . . . in the court of Francis, Duke of Britaine."

A milk-sop, one that never in his life
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again,
Lash hence these overweening rags of France,
These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives,
Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves:
If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd,
And in record left them the heirs of shame.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters? [*Drum afar off.*] Hark! I hear their drum.
Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood;
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!

Enter a Messenger

What says Lord Stanley? will he bring his power?
MESS. My lord, he doth deny to come.
K. RICH. Off with his son George's head!

Hall's *Chronicle* and the *first* edition of Holinshed read *brother's* for *mother's*. There is little doubt that *brother's* is the right reading. Richard's brother, King Edward IV, had arranged with the Duke of Brittany for Richmond to reside at his court.

334 *bobb'd*] buffeted.

341 *Amaze the welkin . . . staves*] Frighten the skies with the execution of your lances. Cf. *Macb.*, I, ii, 51: "banners *flout the sky*."

342 *power*] force, army.

NOR. My lord, the enemy is past the marsh:
After the battle let George Stanley die.
K. RICH. A thousand hearts are great within my bosom:
Advance our standards, set upon our foes;
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!
Upon them! Victory sits on our helms. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Alarum: excursions. Enter NORFOLK *and forces fighting; to him* CATESBY

CATE. Rescue, my Lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue!
The king enacts more wonders than a man,
Daring an opposite to every danger:
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,
Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death.
Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost!

Alarums. Enter KING RICHARD

K. RICH. A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!
CATE. Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.
K. RICH. Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die.

3 *Daring an opposite*] Venturing to oppose himself.

I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
Five have I slain to-day instead of him.
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse! [*Exeunt.*

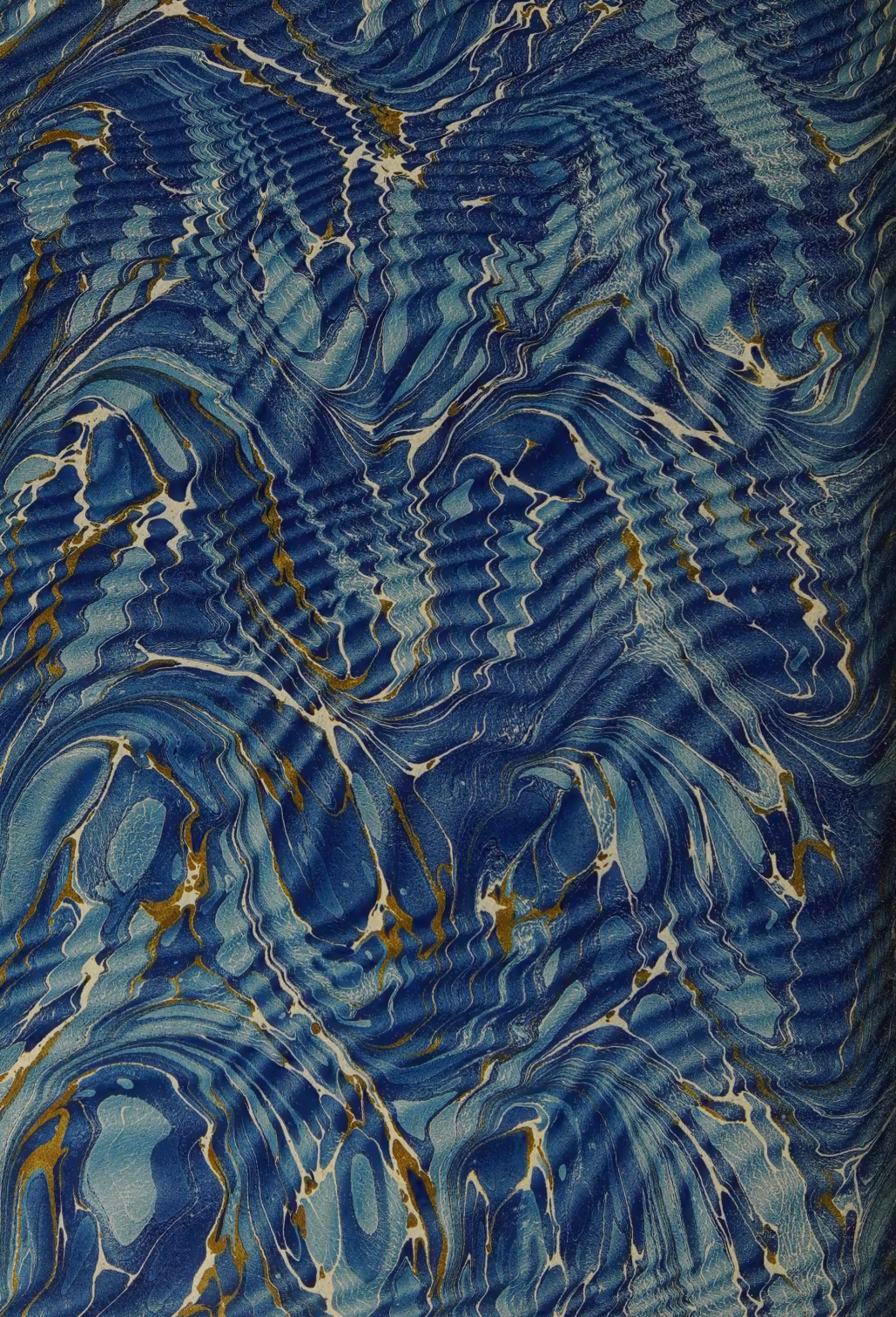
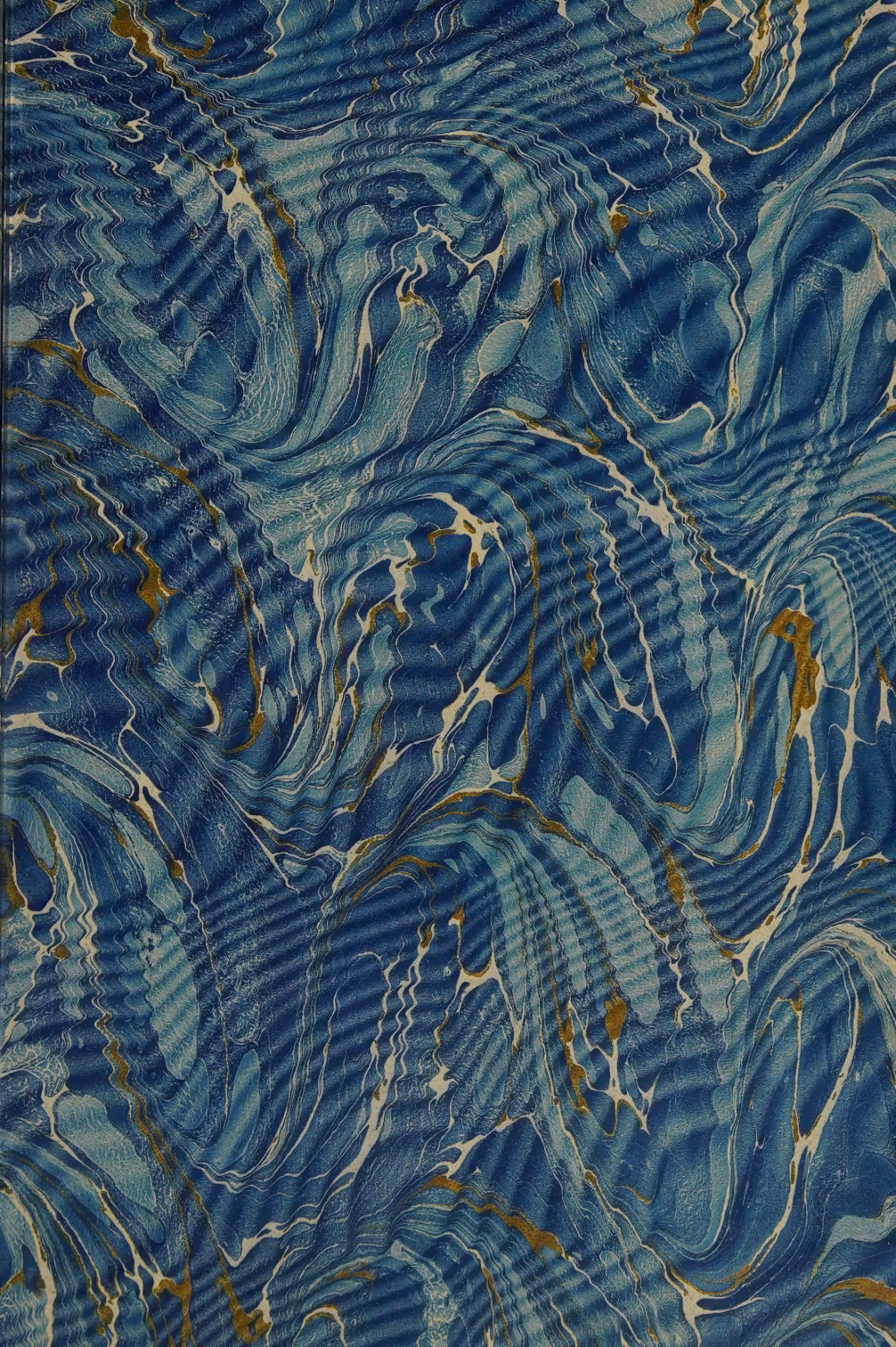
SCENE V — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Alarum. Enter RICHARD *and* RICHMOND; *they fight.* RICHARD *is slain. Retreat and flourish. Re-enter* RICHMOND, DERBY *bearing the crown, with divers other Lords*

RICHM. God and your arms be praised, victorious friends!
The day is ours; the bloody dog is dead.
DER. Courageous Richmond, well hast thou acquit thee.
Lo, here, this long usurped royalty
From the dead temples of this bloody wretch
Have I pluck'd off, to grace thy brows withal:
Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.
RICHM. Great God of heaven, say amen to all!
But, tell me, is young George Stanley living?
DER. He is, my lord, and safe in Leicester town; 10
Whither, if it please you, we may now withdraw us.
RICHM. What men of name are slain on either side?
DER. John Duke of Norfolk, Walter Lord Ferrers,
Sir Robert Brakenbury, and Sir William Brandon.
RICH. Inter their bodies as becomes their births:
Proclaim a pardon to the soldiers fled,
That in submission will return to us:
And then, as we have ta'en the sacrament,

We will unite the white rose and the red.
Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,
That long have frown'd upon their enmity!
What traitor hears me, and says not amen?
England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself;
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,
The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,
The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire:
All this divided York and Lancaster,
Divided in their dire division,
O, now let Richmond and Elizabeth,
The true succeeders of each royal house,
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together!
And let their heirs, God, if thy will be so,
Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace,
With smiling plenty and fair prosperous days!
Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
That would reduce these bloody days again,
And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
Let them not live to taste this land's increase,
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!
Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again:
That she may long live here, God say amen! [*Exeunt.*

25–26 *The father . . . the sire*] Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, II, v, 55–122, where episodes of a son's slaughter by his father and cf a father's slaughter by his son are portrayed.

35 *Abate the edge*] Dull the force or spirit. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, I, i, 17–18: "The *edge of war*, like an ill-sheathed knife, No more shall cut his master."

36 *reduce*] bring back. Cf. II, ii, 68, *supra*, and note.